

How Short is Short?



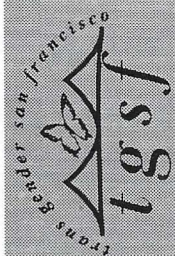
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TGSF TransGender San Francisco is a group for all members of the Transgender Community. Transgender is used as an umbrella term that includes female and male cross dressers, transvestites, drag queens or kings, female or male impersonators, intersexed individuals, pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexuals, masculine females, feminine males, all persons whose perceived gender or anatomical sex may be incongruent with their gender expression, and all persons exhibiting gender characteristics and identities which are perceived to be androgynous.

The Channel



The Channel

TGSF (TransGender San Francisco, a California non-profit corporation), is a non-sexual, membership based organization serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of gender-gifted people, their spouses, significant others, family members, friends, and professionals in the helping services. For details about TGSF programs, membership, article submission guidelines and classified ads, please write to TGSF Secretary, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486.

ExCom 2005 - 2006 Officers

(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

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Fine Print

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	Per Issue	Six Months	Per Year
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4x5	\$ 60	\$300	\$ 600
Full Page	\$100	\$500	\$1000

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FROM THE EDITOR...



Woof! Your Watchdog At Work

TGSF Membership has been dropping, and people have chosen not to renew their membership because that's become easier than speaking up and letting people know what's bothering them. And yet, when they do speak up, they run the risk of being labeled as troublemakers. Our elected - yet volunteer - leaders work their butts off. But it's not a perfect system. Changes have been made to ensure some continuity, and the recent membership survey is a step in the right direction. But much still remains to be addressed.

Recently, we lost a valued member because she was having trouble receiving a ballot. She had been opting for online access to *The Channel*, which affords a measure of privacy for those in the closet. (FYI, our Bylaws prohibit delivery of ballots other than by US Mail or at the Year-End Meeting).

Feeling neglected and frustrated, she chose not to renew her membership, and publicly chastised TGSF for failing to support their online constituency. She went on to call the financial reports "disgraceful," citing that many of them were retreads from one month to the next, and called to account their accuracy while highlighting a mathematical error. She went on to question the lack of detailed accounting on the Cotillion (something I haven't seen in years). She also raised concerns about her dues being wasted on frivolous items - "spending like drunken sailors" was the phrase she used. Did any of you know it cost us \$1,000 to rent a piano this year?

To solve her ballot issue, why wasn't it made available in the member's section of the website? We can make the PDF of the newsletter available as a download, but we can't post a simple Word doc members can download, print and mail? For that matter, why wasn't there an online form for both the ballot and member survey? A few nifty radio buttons, collect the form data in a spreadsheet, cross-reference against member ID (to control ballot stuffing) - it's not that difficult. Later, you'll see a notice in this issue about the "new and improved" website, but I don't think there was anything wrong with the old one. When you visit the "new and improved" website, there's no "there" there; many of the sections are "coming soon" (a design *faux pas* I might add). Wouldn't providing functionality and accessibility to our online membership be a better use of limited volunteer time and resources?

In this day and age of the Internet, it's even more crucial than ever before that TGSF get with the program. If supplying ballots online truly is a Bylaw issue, then we need to look at revising them - and soon. Otherwise, cosmetic makeovers and little substance do nothing to retain our dwindling membership - nor does it attract new members. Should I mention the lost dues they would contribute? For that matter, why can't we renew our membership online? If TGSF were to set up a simple PayPal process, I have no doubts that both membership and dues would make a complete turnaround, and expand the organization's influence not only across the country, but also internationally.

I could go on about the lack of Education events (the sole basis of our 501-c-3 nonprofit status), or the woeful neglect of our Hotline, but instead I want to discuss two things: the Cotillion and Pride.

In the March 2006 issue of this rag, in the ExCom Meeting Minutes (from their meeting held in February), the Vice President's report has this revealing opening sentence: "The Cotillion lost about \$2,000, which seems to be about normal these days." In last month's newsletter, that figure was revised to a loss of "only \$636."

Does anyone but me remember when the Cotillion was THE single largest fundraiser for the organization each year? That one event used to pour hundreds, if not thousands of dollars into the checkbook. Usually there was enough of a surplus that afforded us a photo-op showing the Prez schmoozing with a Honcho and making a sizeable donation to charity. So what has happened? How have we acquired this sense of futile inevitability that we can callously expect to regularly lose money on the Cotillion, and shrug it off as "normal these days?" Are we to continue staying the course, business as usual?

By now you will have also read of the grandiose plans for the upcoming Pride Parade Float (current estimates are running in the thousands of dollars). Can anyone tell me the sense of committing that much of the club's money for an event that has no assurance of yielding even a small monetary return? Sure it's hard to put a price on outreach, and it's nice to win prizes for the float, but do we have to empty the checkbook in order to do it? Where's that money going to come from? Dues again?

Last year there was a hubbub raised because a well-known member of our community (I'll call her "Ms. X") was asked not to march with TGSF in the parade - mainly because she didn't comply with some sort of club-imposed dress code or "theme role," which I would add nobody knew about in advance except those who built the float. Apparently, one of the Float Committee's objectives was to project a favorable impression of trannies for the live television audience, and Ms. X. did not fit in with their vision. Afterwards I had pointed out that their ill-advised decision to exclude her contradicted the group's mission statement (which you'll find on the cover of every newsletter). In my opinion, the whole incident - and the public discussion surrounding it - made a significant dent in the group's credibility, and has likely contributed to the problems we face of community apathy and sinking-like-a-stone membership.

In the ExCom Profile last month (on page 5), you'll see a photo of our outgoing Prez riding on the 2002 float, having been invited spur of the moment to hop aboard despite the fact that she clearly didn't fit in with that year's Hawaiian theme. Yet last year we turned away a long-time compatriot because of what she was wearing...or not wearing (as the case may be). What's up with that?

Drunken sailors indeed.

PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Missy Shake

Dangling Conversations

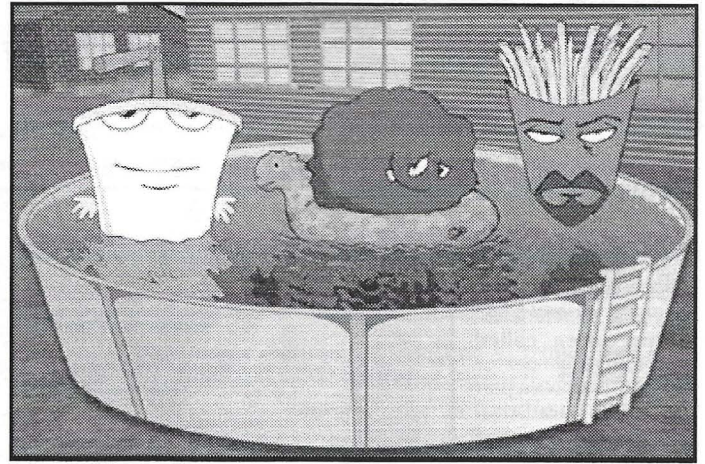
Surprised to see me? I know I am. I wasn't sure if I was even going to write a column this month, as I have no official title within TGSF, other than outgoing President and Treasurer candidate. But I decided what the hey. It was either write this or watch Volume 4 of my *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* DVD, although the latter would be far more enjoyable.

I've done some research on my family tree and have discovered some heretofore-unknown information. I have discovered that, for a time, my gypsy parents, Ella and Julio, lived on the South Jersey Shore. During that time, my mother met a man and had a torrid love affair with him and I was the product of that union. Shamed by this, my mother left me with my real father, Master Shake, and his two roommates who became my uncles, Meatwad and Frylock. That's them l-r in the picture. I've been told I resemble my Dad, only I don't have a big straw sticking out of me. Well, I do, only it's in a place you can't see. And I discovered that my real name is Mistress Shake which was shortened to Missy. So my real name is not Lucretia, but Missy. Finally, when I was a small girl my Uncle Frylock got tired of me playing with his scientific equipment and the three of them took me fishing. At an opportune moment, they tossed me overboard, seemingly to die. But as fate would have it, I was rescued by fisherman Peter Griffin who took me home to Lois. And the rest of the story you already know.

But I digress. I was fretting about whether or not I would get elected as Treasurer but have come to the point that I don't really care. It's not as if I am ambivalent about the whole thing. Kelly Marsh used to say that she didn't need a title to do outreach. Well, I don't need a title to contribute to TGSF. I can do all of the things that I used to do and more. I can still do outreach. I can still work for the community. I've already committed to participating in the Santa Cruz, San Jose and San Francisco Prides. I will be representing TGSF at the Pagan Alliance festival (an event I had to beg to participate in and only because I paid with my own money), I will go to the May BBQ and GAPA. I'll be attending California Dreamin' and I am still a board member there. I still go to RGA. I still answer questions from people and give interviews and provide resources. So if I don't get elected, what changes? Nothing. I just won't need to go to ExCom meetings and prepare agendas and worry about the financial state of the organization.

One thing is important to realize is that each of you in our viewing audience has the same power. You don't need a title to help out. You don't need a title to do outreach. Pride season is coming up and we'll need volunteers to help build the float, donate some volunteer hours to San Francisco Pride which will help TGSF and be a contingent monitor on the day of the parade. At this time we don't know what our float will look like and what kind of effort it will take but I am sure we can use all the help we can get. This year, Jennifer Kennedy, Ms. TGSF 2005 is organizing our Pride effort. As you know, Jenni was appointed as Vice-President to fill out Laura's term and I know she would appreciate your support.

You can also help us a great deal by telling us what kind of organization you want. I hope you completed the survey, which was on the back of the ballot. By the way, I know some of you voting members of TGSF were not provided with ballots and I apologize for that. It was an oversight. I also want to let our on-line members know that you are just as important to us as those who get the Channel via mail. We have had some changes in duties and transitioning after Laura left and people are trying to scramble around to get their jobs done. Please be patient. I also appreciate those who had problems bringing them to my attention. That's how we get things corrected.



(l-r) Roxy's real father Master Shake and her two uncles, Meatwad and Frylock

Two areas I would like to see emphasized in the upcoming year include education and outreach. Education used to be a strong suit of TGSF but we seem to have let that slide. I know that sometimes these things are hard to put together – getting schedules to match, finding venues, deciding the best programs, etc. But there is a huge untapped audience out there. If Sydney was able to get the Transgender Law Center to come to RGA in San Jose for a 4 part series, TGSF should be able to do the same thing. I have spoken with Dr. Beck (my plastic surgeon who did a great job on my nose) and he is very interested in making a presentation to TGSF. I've seen his PowerPoint presentation and it is full of good information. Patricia Kevena-Fili has offered to do a presentation on the importance of transgender rights. There are a lot of people out there willing to help but we need to ask them to do. I would like to see at least 4 separate (not at end of month) events in this upcoming year.

We also need to return our focus to outreach and to helping everyone in the gender spectrum who wants to be a part of our organization. That means going where the people are. I had to beg to have TGSF participate in the Pagan Alliance festival (in a public park) because I know that there are many transgender people in that group (Patricia for example). But I was told that this would be promoting religion I felt that was a bogus argument because paganism encompasses a wide variety of beliefs and traditions and practices. And as it was brought up, by appearing at an event we aren't necessarily promoting the theme of the event, much as in the same way as appearing in Gay Pride or Folsom Street Fair or GAPA. We are looking for members of those groups who might be interested in joining our group. And we are not promoting religion any more than we are by having our Cotillion rehearsals IN A CHURCH or than RGA is by meeting IN A CHURCH. But anyway, Jennifer Anderson, Sydney and I will be representing TGSF at this event. Again our focus needs to be reaching out to members of the transgender community whether they are drag queens to crossdressers, whether they are full time or part time, whether they have had SRS or have consciously chosen not to, whether they live in San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Cruz, whether they are pagans or Christians or Jews, whether they are Asian, Africa American, Hispanic or Caucasian. We are here for all.

When you get a moment, listen to Frank Sinatra's "The House I Live In". It's not just what America means to me. It's what's this community means to me and what it should mean to all of us. We need to love up to those ideals. They are on our masthead. We need to learn to live up to them.

Missy

A THIRD-GENDER PASSAGE TO INDIA

Playwright Ash Kotak

Portrays The Quintessential Outsiders

by Sandip Roy
Bay Area Reporter

When Ash Kotak wrote a play called *Hijra*, he had no illusions that most audiences in the West would have simply no frame of reference. Hijras, often called India's third gender or eunuchs, have been part of Indian tradition through Hindu lore and Muslim courts. When Kotak, who was born in North London to Indian parents, went back to India on visits, he would see hijras dancing at weddings. "It was quite remarkable to see that in a country where homosexuality itself was illegal," he says.

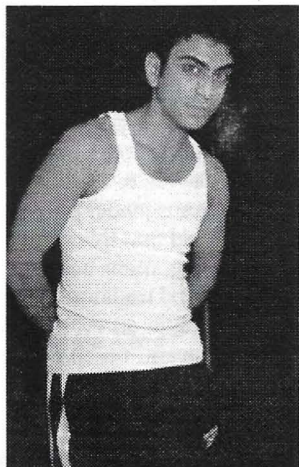


Shruti Tewari, Rachel Rajputi and Maya Capur in *Hijra*. Photo: Lois Tema

In some sense, hijras are the quintessential outsiders in India. They sing and dance at the rituals of births and weddings, rituals from which they themselves are excluded. As a gay Indian man growing up in London, Kotak was fascinated by that notion of outsider. Some part of him was often an outsider, no matter which world he was in.

Hijra, opening Saturday at the New Conservatory Theatre Center, is a way for Kotak to bridge those worlds. "It's about identity," he says. "If you compartmentalize your life, you can't love yourself."

That's why the 30something Kotak decided not to shy away from either his sexuality or his ethnicity in his first full-length play. Kotak had already built up quite a résumé producing and directing dramas and documentaries for Channel 4 in Britain and BBC Radio, winning awards like the Fuji Film Scholarship Award and BP Expo Film Award.



Hijra playwright Ash Kotak: "Bollywood meets *Brokeback*."

But in *Hijra*, he really comes home. Almost too close. His father, who was very involved in Indian national theater, is torn between pride and discomfort. "Do you have to be so noisy about it?" he asks his son.

Hijra is about Nils, a young man from the West who goes to India and falls in love with Raj, a young man he meets on a cruising beach who is the adopted son of a guru hijra. Of course, all the while, Nils' mother and a gaggle of busybody aunts are determined to get him married off. It's being called "Bollywood meets *Brokeback*."

That might be a sexy marketing slogan, but Kotak sees the play as being really about love and tolerance. It's a conversation whose time has come, he says. It took him two years to stage the play in England because many theaters were worried about how Asian audiences would react. Many Gujarati newspapers refused to cover it, even though a venerable Gujarati actress was acting in it.

Kotak remembers how young Pakistani youth started hurling homophobic insults in Urdu in the middle of a performance. But then something remarkable happened. "Four women stood up and screamed at the guys in Urdu," he recalls. "And the audience started to applaud."

Sticking Point

He knows that issues like homosexuality are still taboo in immigrant communities, even if the home countries might now be showing films like *Brokeback Mountain* in Bombay, and having talk shows on homosexuality on television. "People get stuck in the year they come to the West," says Kotak. He hopes *Hijra* will get them a little "unstuck," even if it makes them uncomfortable.

"Sometimes truth hurts," says Kotak. "Theater should be entertaining, but also about uncomfortable viewing." He decided the best way to talk about many of the issues he raises in *Hijra* was through comedy. "I hoped people would laugh so much they wouldn't have time to digest what they were seeing," he

April 2006

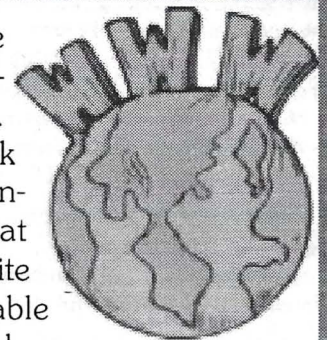
TGSF ExCom MEETING MINUTES

There was no ExCom Meeting in April.



TGSF Website Update

The TGSF website has been totally remodeled and updated. With a slick new look and easy to update interface we hope that once again our website will become a valuable tool for you, our members, to find timely information about upcoming events and what is going on within your organization. A big thank you to Laura Marlowe for all of the hard work she did on this project! It looks fantastic!



Please check us out when you can. And, if you have suggestions about how we can make it even better please send an e-mail to: webmistress@tgsf.org.

says. And it seems to be working. He remembers how South Asian aunties in Britain told him when they came to see the play, they were nervous about the content. But by the end, they said they just wanted the boys to be together. Bingo, says Kotak, who points out he really wrote the play for people like his parents. "*Hijra* is about love," he says. "How do you respond to love?"

Well, if his mother had her way, he'd be married to some nice girl from India, that's how. He remembers how during a particularly intimate scene, as the boys were about to kiss, he heard someone go, "Ohhh, no!" in a shocked, distinctively Indian accent. It was his mother. A friend called out, "That's Ash's mother," and the whole audience cracked up.

In a way, it's a wonderful example of how the play functions on the fault-lines between communities, juxtaposing the familiar with the unfamiliar in the hopes of provoking dialogue, if not understanding.

Hopefully, some of the silences will be broken. Kotak remembers meeting two women at a party in India years ago. "They've been friends for 25 years," someone told him. "They never got married, they are career women." Maybe after *Hijra*, there won't be a need for so many euphemisms. Pipe dream? Romantic Bollywood fantasy? "Why can't we live in fantasy?" asks Kotak with a chuckle. "We have to have a vision for the world we want, don't we?"

From the Desk of Ms. TGSF

PRIDE SEASON IS COMING!

By Jennifer Anderson

By the time you read this article it will be less than one month from the beginning of "Pride Season" starting with Santa Cruz Pride on June 4th. If you have never been to a pride event you owe it to yourself to turn out this year.

This year is especially significant as it marks the 40th anniversary of the Compton's Cafeteria Riot, which we in the bay area believe to be the true beginning of the LGBT rights movement. We are hoping to get a commemorative plaque placed at the former site of Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco this year, and thereby mark both the significance of the event and the important role that the transgender community has played in gaining the rights and freedoms we enjoy today.

If that isn't enough to inspire you then let me tell you, based on my experience last year, a pride parade is one of the greatest and most positive experiences I've ever had. In San Francisco (the largest celebration) several hundred thousand people turn out to celebrate themselves and throw the best street party you've ever seen!

So, whether you march with us (in Santa Cruz, San Jose or San Francisco), ride on our float (in SF) or provide volunteer help putting it all together, I promise you memories that will last a lifetime. Please come join us. You'll be glad you did!

ON THE ROAD WITH Ms. TGSF

By Jennifer Anderson

One of the duties of Ms. TGSF is to keep the membership informed about how she is serving them so here goes with another chapter in the on-going adventures of an alleged beauty queen.

Since the last time I checked in I became a certified (not certifiable) panel speaker on gender awareness issues through an organization called Triangle Speakers in Santa Cruz (near my home town). I had a wonderful time during the training though I was accused (for one of the few times) of being underdressed! For some reason they were expecting a crossdresser to be wearing more than jeans and sneakers! Go figure!!!

My first speaking engagement will be May 7th at Evergreen College in San Jose and I'm very excited. Essentially I'm out doing what I wish had been done for me in school 30 years ago (when I was a baby of course). That is, helping to provide reliable information about transgender issues and the LGBT community.

Other adventures included a (very) brief appearance (thanks to Donna Sachet) on a local cable show called OutSpoken. I got a chance to hang out with some of the key folks from SF Pride and put in a plug for our next Cotillion. Later this month I will be speaking on a panel at the Cal Dreamin' conference (thanks to Laura Marlowe) on running a TG support group. And finally, I made my debut as a print model. That is, I was the poster child for Romantasy Exquisite Corsetry at the IFGE conference in Philadelphia! Thank you to Ann Grogan for that special thrill! (I'll be signing posters later)

I continue to be very excited about representing TGSF as Ms. TGSF and I don't think it's too soon to start urging others to think about competing in 2007! You get to wear a tiara wherever you go <big grin> but more importantly, you get to meet a lot of great people from a lot of great organizations and from it gain a much greater appreciation for all of those unsung heroes who make our lives as transgendered men and women easier, happier and more fulfilling.

So, start thinking about it now. Dare to let yourself dream. You could be Ms. TGSF 2007. It all begins when you let yourself dream!

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GenderQueer, Trans, & Gender Questioning Youth Group

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This youth program will provide space for discussion groups, workshops and activities, specifically for genderqueer youth and their allies. We are excited to be offering this new programming, for an underserved population, even in our own community. This new group is for young people 20 and under, who identify somewhere on the gender non-conforming spectrum, who are questioning their gender identity or who are considering transitioning.

This group will meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month from 5-6pm at the DeFrank Center, which is located at 938 The Alameda, in San Jose. For more information please contact T. Aaron Hans, Program Director at 408.293.3040 ext. 112 or at progdir@defrank.org.



TGSF Events in May

Wednesday / May 3 / Begins 7:30pm

MID PENINSULA SUPPORT GROUP

Meets from 7:30 to 9:30 at the Full Circle Bookstore on the El Camino in Belmont. For information, contact Laura Patterson at [REDACTED]

Saturday / May 6

CARLA'S MONTHLY DINNER

Carla's Monthly Dinner in May will be held at El Torito Restaurant on Saturday the 6th. For more information, contact Carla at [REDACTED]

Sunday / May 7 / 1:00pm

TGSF EXCOM MEETING

Your newly elected Executive Committee meets for the first time at the Cathedral Hill Restaurant. There's a lot to absorb as we ramp up for a new fiscal year, beginning with our Pride Parade plans. Volunteers are needed desperately for this important and fabulous event. All are welcome!

Thursday / May 11 / Begins 7:00pm

TGSF MID-MONTH

Another fun Mid-month is being planned by Katra Briel. It will be held at the Cathedral Hill Hotel in San Francisco on Van Ness at Geary, beginning at 7:00. For more information, please contact Katra at katra.briel@tgsf.org.

Thursday / May 11 / 7:00pm - 8:30pm

TRANSGENDER LAW -101 BILLY DEFRANK CENTER

This workshop focuses on issues that transgender people and their families face as employees, tenants, consumers, and students. It covers basic state laws, examples of discrimination, and suggestion for taking action if you are discriminated against.

Sunday / May 21 / 11:00am - 6:00pm

TGSF - MAC PRESENT SUN DRESSING

Join TGSF and MAC at the Bloomingdale Store in the Stanford Shopping Center for a complete makeover with MAC's new colors for summer, 2006. Appointments are available from 11:00 through 6:00. For more information, or to schedule your appointment, please contact Jennifer Anderson at Jennifer.Anderson@tgsf.org or Lisa Dummer at [REDACTED]

Thursday / May 25 / Begins 7:00pm

TGSF END OF MONTH

The End of Month will be held on Thursday, May 25th. This will be the first meeting under the newly constituted ExCom. It will be held at the Cathedral Hill Hotel, beginning at 7:00pm.

Saturday / May 27 / 4:00pm

TGSF MEMORIAL WEEKEND PICNIC

Join TGSF at our first Memorial Weekend picnic at Carla's from 4:00 to 9:00. For more information, please contact Katra Briel at katra.briel@tgsf.org.

May's Birthdays

5/01	Valerie Cross	5/15	Cindy Martin
5/01	Susan Agles	5/16	Vera Sepulveda
5/01	Sylvia Finak	5/16	Amanda Gonzalez
5/01	Alicia Kenwood	5/17	Ginger Collins
5/01	Cindy McKay	5/18	Rhonda Shaw
5/02	Dawnne Marie Woodie	5/18	L. Kaplan
5/02	Consuela Valdes	5/19	Nikki Rillingale
5/03	Kellen Steel	5/20	Terry Ryan
5/04	Melanie Okubo	5/21	Robyn Smith
5/07	Sofia	5/21	Tyler Fong
5/09	April Brennan	5/21	Sybil Holiday
5/09	Gracie Thoreson	5/23	Angela Pidge
5/10	Alicia Chan	5/25	Tianna Marie DeVil
5/10	J.F. Schimmel	5/25	Marielle Valence
5/12	Joyce White	5/28	Nicole Cook
5/13	Sallie Hunt	5/28	Siobhan Ellis
5/13	Serena Anderson	5/28	Magan Regiani
5/13	Laura Marlowe	5/29	Sarah Holloway
5/14	Phyllis Fink	5/30	Jane Bolig
		5/30	Chris Silver

Happy Birthday To All!

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Bay Area Calendar - May 2006

OTHER BAY AREA GROUPS

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

Diablo Valley Girls (DVG)

Meets 1st & 3rd Monday every month, 8pm at Club 1220, 1220 Pine Street in Walnut Creek. Write to DVG, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885 or call 925-937-8432.

DVG Rap Group (RCC)

Meets 1st Thursday of every month, 7pm at Rainbow Community Center, 3024 Willow Pass Road in Concord 925-937-8432.

FTM International

Support group for Female-to-Male CDs & TSs; Holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write FTMI, 160 14th Street, SF, CA 94103; 415-553-5987, or email: info@ftmi.org

I Love It Girl Socials

Every Wednesday night at I Love It Boutique, 45979 Warm Springs Blvd., #7 in Fremont. Call Jo-An at 510-656-4738.

Mid-Peninsula TG Group (MPTG)

TGSF-sponsored support group; 7pm, First Wednesday of each month at Full Circle Books in Belmont, CA. Contact Laura Patterson at Laura@laurasoft.com.

Pacific Ctr for Human Growth (PacCtr)

A counseling oriented growth center sponsors all-inclusive gender support groups on every Friday at 8:00pm, 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, 510-548-8283.

Rainbow Gender Association (RGA)

Meets 1st and 3rd Friday of the month 8pm at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. Mail: PO Box 700730, San Jose, CA 95170 or call 408-984-4044.

Sacramento Gender Association (SGA)

Blue Rose Chapter meets 8pm the 2nd and 4th Saturday each month in Sacramento. Write PO Box 162907, Sacramento, CA 95816 or call 916-364-7212 for meeting locations. Website: www.transgender.org/sga; email: sga@transgender.org

Santa Cruz Trans (SCT)

Bi-weekly social/support group for gender-gifted persons serving Santa Cruz and Central Coast. 1st and 3rd Tuesdays every month at The Diversity Center, 177 Walnut Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (831) 425-5422; 7pm

SCOUT (SCOUT)

Santa Cruz Organization for Uniting Transmen, meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Diversity Center (listed above); 7:30pm

Silicon Valley Gender Association (SVGA)

A new TG support group meets at the Billy De Frank Community Ctr in San Jose on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month from 7-9pm. For more information, call 408-293-2429.

TGIF

Social group for transgenders. Meets one Saturday each month at a private home in Santa Rosa for a potluck social from 4pm until early evening. Space is limited - Reservations Recommended! Call Diane or Anne at 707-544-1540.

T.R.A.N.S

MTF support group meets every Wednesday afternoon 2pm at 1145 Bush Street in San Francisco.

TransSpirit Ministry (TSM)

Gathering @ Metropolitan Community Church of SF, 150 Eureka, SF. Second Friday each month. Potluck dinner, social, and discussion time. For information, contact Dawnne Woodie (415) 748-2396 or sf_dawnne@yahoo.com

TransVis-HWD

TransVision Social TG Women meets 7pm, 4th Friday every month. Light refreshments and a wonderful atmosphere. Contact Tiffany at (510) 713-6690, ext. 9.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting 8:00 PM DVG	2 7:00 PM SCT	3 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social 7:30 PM MPTG	4 7:00 PM DVG RCC	5 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	6 Carla's Dinner
7 1:00 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting	8	9	10 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	11 7:00 PM TGSF Mid-Month	12 7:00 PM SVGA 7:00 PM TSM 8:00 PM PacCtr	13 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
14	15 8:00 PM DVG	16 7:00 PM SCT	17 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	18 TG Legal Clinic	19 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	20
21 11:00 AM TGSF & MAC Sun Dressing	22	23 7:30 PM SCOUT	24 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	25 7:00 PM TGSF EOM	26 7:00 PM SVGA 7:00 PM TransVis-HWD 8:00 PM PacCtr	27 4:00 PM TGSF Memorial Day Picnic 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
28	29	30	31 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social			

TGSF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is billed annually upon enrollment: \$40 Single / \$45 Family

Special \$35 Single Membership w/ Email-Only* Delivery of CHANNEL

Please Print / Check all that apply:

New Member | Renewal Member #: _____ | with Family Member | What Year did you first join TGSF? _____

Preferred Name: _____ Birthdate (Month/Day): ____ / ____

Mailing Name: _____

Family Member's Name: _____ Birthdate (Month/Day): ____ / ____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Optional: Telephone: (_____) _____ What Name should we ask for if we need to call you? _____

*Email: _____ Website URL: _____

Would you like a link from the TGSF Website to your URL? Yes No

May we use photos of you taken at TGSF events in our newsletter or website? Yes No

Send Check or Money Order to: TGSF, PO Box 426486
San Francisco, CA 94142-6486, or hand to any Board
Member at a TGSF Social.

Takin' Care of Biz...

TGSF FINANCIAL REPORT

As of April 15, 2006

Assets

Cash	\$3,608.36
?	\$100.00
Beverages	\$50.00
Total	\$3,758.36

Liabilities and Equity

Accounts Receivable	\$70.00
Accounts Payable	\$0.00
Total	\$70.00

Statement of TGSF Income

Memberships	\$195.00
Advertising	\$200.00
Donations	\$140.00
Cowell Theatre ticket sales	\$1,273.25
Wedding Party	\$707.00
Misc.	\$90.00
Total	\$2,605.25

Expenses

Channel	\$865.00
Phone	\$99.78
Misc.	200.79
Total	\$1,165.57

Net Income **\$1,439.68**

TGSF DONATIONS

Our Friends Who Give
as of April 15, 2006

Diane Sauer	\$10.00
Roxy (info table at Pagan Festival)	\$30.00

Bless You and Thank You for Caring!

CONTACT TGSF!

2005-06 Executive Committee

President

Roxy Carmichael-Hart roxy.carmichaelhart@tgsf.org

Vice President

Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy ... [REDACTED]

Secretary

Lisa Rae Dummer [REDACTED]

Treasurer

Pamela Gray [REDACTED]

Or [REDACTED]

Education

Dawnne Woodie [REDACTED]

Jennifer Anderson jennifer.anderson@tgsf.org

Outreach

Allison D Laureano [REDACTED]

Bonnie Bryen TBD

Social

Tommie Watson [REDACTED]

Katra Briel [REDACTED]

Other Email Addresses

Editor, The Channel

Ayme Kantz [REDACTED]

Ms. TGSF 2006

Jennifer Anderson jennifer.anderson@tgsf.org

Mr. TGSF 2006

Sydney A. Mason [REDACTED]

TGSF.Org Webmistress

OPEN webmistress@tgsf.org

Calendar www.tgsf.org

*Submissions can be made online directly.
Cancelling mistakes or for other problems,
please contact the Webmistress.*

PISSR

People In Search of Safe Restrooms

PISSR is committed to establishing gender-neutral bathrooms. We believe that all people, regardless of their gender identification or presentation, have the right to access safe and dignified restroom facilities without fear of harassment, judgment, or violence. General meetings are always the first Monday of the month; 7 pm at 870 Market Street (Flood Building), 4th floor in San Francisco.

KIM HRACA, M.A. MFT

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LIFE IN THE T-ZONE

With the aid of testosterone, biological women are expanding the old ideas of male and female. But being gender-queer can involve health risks

**By Sue Rochman
The Advocate**

Renata Razza was born female and came out as a lesbian at 15. It was a declaration that took few by surprise. She'd always looked gender-ambiguous. But as time went on, Razza became more convinced that her internal self and her physical body didn't line up. So in 2003 she decided to start taking testosterone. But Razza, 33, doesn't identify as male, nor does he want to live life as a man. Instead, Razza wants to live in a space between male and female. His identity of choice? Gender-queer.

If bisexuals defy the notion that a person can be attracted only to one gender, gender-queers explode the concept that a person has to be one gender. "People who identify as gender-queer," says Lydia Sausa, a trainer at the California STD/HIV Prevention Training Center, "are blending and blurring and living outside of gender dichotomies." And in cities with large LGBT populations like San Francisco and on a number of college campuses, it's becoming increasingly easy to meet biological females who are taking testosterone not because they intend to transition from female to male but because they want to masculinize their bodies in a way that better reflects how they feel inside.

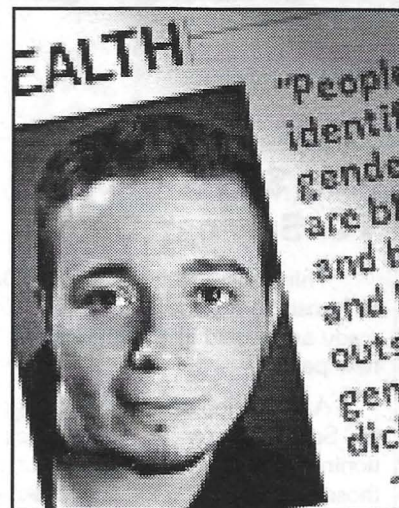
"People are looking at gender as being more fluid," says Luanna Rodgers, a psychotherapist who heads the Transgender Life Care program at San Francisco's Castro-Mission Health Center. "In the past there wasn't any place to go with gender except full sex reassignment. The older generation and the medical profession pretty much thought of it as a total crossover process. Now there are a lot of people who are starting to live in between the gender binary boxes."

For an older generation of feminists who fought to expand options for women, butch dykes who struggled for acceptance, and female-to-male transsexuals who wanted to leave behind their lives as women, this new use of testosterone may be hard to understand. But others say it's a logical next step for a group that has challenged gender identity constructs for a long time. "People are wanting to express multiple parts of who they are, and for some, FTM or MTF doesn't fit," says James Guay, a counselor at the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center in San Francisco. "It's like flipping gender on its side and looking at it from a different perspective."

Jody Vormohr, a staff physician in the Transgender Clinic at San Francisco's Tom Waddell Health Center, says that over the past few years she has begun seeing more biological females who are interested in masculinizing their bodies but not necessarily identifying as male or living their lives as men. "We had to decide if this was a population we would treat, and our decision was yes," says Vormohr. "We see people who are in all different phases of gender identity, and so we prescribe testosterone in doses that cause the effect that the patient wants."

But while it's one thing to play with gender, it's another to play with testosterone, or T, as it's commonly called. "Testosterone is a powerful drug," says Lori Kohler, a physician specializing in transgender care at San Francisco General Hospital. And, she stresses, a physician should supervise its use. Yet all too often, Kohler and others say, they hear about people who are purchasing testosterone on the Internet or on the street or sharing doses—and needles—with friends.

Health care providers also have had to address the misconception that they can control what testosterone will or won't do to a biological female's body. A common desire, says Willy Wilkinson, a Bay Area public health consultant who works with trans youth, is for a person to want to "pick and choose certain effects of testosterone. But the reality is you can't.... Some people want to get changes to their voice and their musculature. And the voice changes are irreversible. But if a person stops taking testosterone, their musculature will go back to how it was before."



Physicians stress that a person on testosterone should have regular blood tests to ensure that the drug is not causing liver problems or increasing cholesterol to dangerously high levels. And although there have been few studies on the long-term effects of biological females taking testosterone, there are concerns that the drug, even when used at a low dose, can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, uterine cancer, and breast cancer (this is true even if top surgery to remove the breasts has been performed).

There are sexual health concerns as well. A person who identifies as gender-queer and takes testosterone "may end up having sex with men," says Kohler. "Testosterone dramatically increases libido, and oftentimes it opens up sexuality and broadens horizons as to who a person chooses as a partner. And if they came out of the lesbian community, where lesbians generally don't think a lot about sexually transmitted diseases or becoming pregnant," they will need to think about this. (Someone on a low dose of testosterone who still has a period can get pregnant.)

Beyond that, there are the day-to-day realities of trying to live a multigendered life in a binary-gendered society. Sam Davis, a graduate student at San Francisco State University who is studying the effects of testosterone on mood, also identifies as gender-queer. Currently taking testosterone, Sam is "saving up" the thousands of dollars he will need for his top surgery. But even after the surgery, Davis, who used to identify as a butch dyke, will see himself not as male but as "an FTM gender-queer." "I don't want to leave my affiliation with my dyke past behind," he says. "And I don't feel that I fit what society considers a traditional man."

Yet, as Razza has learned, at a certain point it can become difficult to keep the changes one chooses to make to one's body from becoming defining qualities. "There's this funny thing that has happened," says Razza. "Now that I've had my top surgery, I'm not gender-ambiguous anymore. So what I want now is for people to see past my apparent gender to my femininity." Because the fact is, Razza adds, "neither 'he' or 'she' fits me 100% of the time."

Significant Other Support East Bay

Questions or concerns about your partner's crossdressing? Please call Julie at [REDACTED] or e-mail [REDACTED] or write to: Julie Freeman, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885.

Events and Announcements!

NEW SANTA CRUZ TG SUPPORT GROUP

Thinking about transitioning? Don't know where to start? In transition and need some support? Made the journey already and would like to share your experiences or just meet new people?

Announcing a brand new support and social group at the UC Santa Cruz campus for transsexual, transgendered, questioning folks and their allies. The group is geared towards those making, thinking about making, or who have made the physical and/or social transition from female to male (FTM) or male to female (MTF).

Students, staff, and faculty are all welcome.

The first meeting will be at the Lionel Cantu GLBTI Center on the UCSC campus, Tues. Oct. 11th @ 7:30pm. The group will be deciding on a name for the group so please bring your ideas! Regular meetings will be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month.

Questions?

Email **Nic Winter** winter@chemistry.ucsc.edu

MID-MONTH SOCIAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

TGSF is looking for some enthusiastic and motivated people to help plan our mid-month socials. All it takes to plan these events is for someone to call a venue that is hopefully very TG friendly and see if they would be willing to host our event. Mid-months can expect anywhere from 10-20 people.

If you would like to help with these events, please contact [REDACTED] Thank you!

NEW TRANS ADVISORY HOTLINE OF AMERICA

1-877-427-3230

This will supply anyone in the U.S. with sources of: Referrals for Medical; Gender Therapists; Transgender groups and organizations; Peer support

Hopefully, at a future date; we will have forwarding capabilities to someone in the state you reside in; answers to questions to veterans issues, problems; and avenues to help in times of natural disasters on a transgender level.

FTM GET-TOGETHER AND SATURDAY BRUNCH

Every Saturday @ 1pm • The Crepevine 216 Church St., San Francisco, CA 94114 • Castro †Cross street: 15th & Market St. • (415) 431-4646. For further directions call Marty @ [REDACTED]



Mid-Peninsula Support Group

WEDNESDAY, May 3, 2006

Full Circle Books

1538 El Camino Real, Belmont, CA 94002
(650) 508-9546

7:30 - 9:30 P.M.

All welcome regardless of race, age, gender, gender identification \$1 donation will be requested but no one will be turned away.

For more details please contact Laura Patterson at Laura@laurasoft.com

Please note: This is a support group. The views expressed in this group are reflective of the attendees and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ExCom and members of TGSF.

You are encouraged to speak to your personal physician and/or therapist regarding your specific treatment and care.

TG HEALTH SERVICES AVAILABLE IN SANTA CRUZ

Beginning in October of this year under a California Endowment Grant, The Diversity Center of Santa Cruz and Planned Parenthood Mar Monte Westside Health Center are jointly working to provide therapy referrals, health care and hormone therapy services to the Santa Cruz transgender community.

They also offer a support group the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month between the hours of 7:30 and 9:30pm at the Diversity Center of Santa Cruz office located at 1117 Soquel Avenue.

For more information about this exciting program, please contact **LuLu Manus** by e-mail lmanus@diversitycenter.org or (831) 425-5422.

TRANSVISION SOCIAL — HAYWARD

TransVision Social Transgender Women will meet at **7:00pm on the fourth Friday of every month** to celebrate our survival. Come and share your journey of daily living and participate in the affirmation of our lives. For each of our journeys and our vision, let us validate, support and affirm each other and celebrate our success.

There will be light refreshments and a wonderful atmosphere. Come for that good feeling. For more information, contact Tiffany at (510) 713-6690, ext. 9. Don't miss this!

Events and Announcements!

Saturday, May 6!

DVG FIESTA!

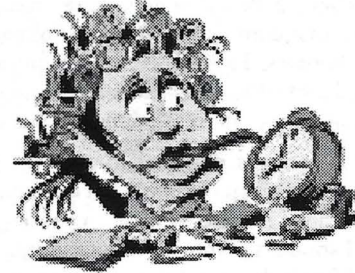


The DVG BBQ Series begun last year continues!

Hola Muchachas es Muchachos! It's time to dust off your serapes and sombreros, mix up a batch of sangria, or enjoy the premium margaritas at the Wacky Castaways Bar! Manja fajitas es frijoles and pass the guac - Me Gusta! The Mariachi music will be a-swingin' on the deck overlooking beautiful Mt. Diablo in Walnut Creek. Bring a towel if you want to use the hot tub. You MUST RSVP for this event for directions, as well as sign-up to bring something to share! Actually showing up is a plus! Volunteers to help out are welcome! Call the DVG hotline at **925-937-8432**. Party starts at 4:00pm - Viva!

TGSF & MAC Cosmetics Present:

MAC "SUNDRESSING" MAKEUP EVENT



Having troubles doing it yourself? Come learn from the MAC Team experts and be among the first to see MAC's new summer products.

When: Sunday, May 21st, 11AM to 6PM

Where: MAC @ Bloomingdale's in Palo Alto

RSVP: Lisa Dummer lisa.dummer@tgsf.org or Jennifer Anderson Jennifer.Anderson@tgsf.org

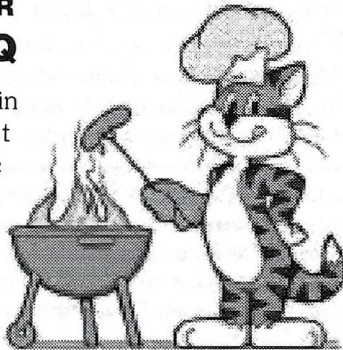
Makeovers are done by appointment and MAC is waiving the minimum purchase requirement for this event! Such a deal!!!

Contact Lisa or Jennifer for additional info, or visit the website at: www.tgsf.org

TGSF SUMMER KICK OFF BBQ

Come out and join TGSF for the first social event of the summer. Sunshine will be provided!

Parties at Carla's are always a delight and proceeds from this event will help fund TGSF's participation in bay area Pride events.



When: Saturday May 27th, 4PM to 9PM

Where: Carla's Salon & Boutique, 124 Race St., San Jose, CA / (408) 298-6900

Cost: \$10 for members/\$12 for non-members. Join TGSF at the event and get the lower rate!

Contact Katra or Tommi for additional info, or visit the website at: www.tgsf.org

TRANS MARCH 2006!

Friday June 23rd, the Friday before Pride
3:00pm - 7:00pm Speakers and Performers
7:00pm March

Dolores Park, Dolores and 19th Street.

**Calling all Transfolks, Friends,
Allies and Admirers!**

We are calling for this march to demonstrate that we are a significant and growing portion of the LGBTIQ community; to increase our visibility and presence in the TGIQLB community and the overall community at large; to encourage more trans and gender-variant people to come out; to build connections among ftm, mtf, bayot, crossdressers, sadhin, hijra, transvestites, bantut, drag queens, drag kings, mahu, transsexuals, bakla, travesti, genderqueers, kathoey, two spirit, intersex and those with other labels for themselves and no labels for themselves, those who see gender as having more than two options, and those who live between the existing options; to support one another as a community, through all of our struggles; to speak out against violence, hate, transphobia, and the oppression of any and all of us under the existing social structure; and to be fabulous and powerful in the company of others that are fabulous and powerful. Dress up, show up, bring signs, speak out, and be what happens!

For more info or to volunteer, please contact info@transmarch.org.

The Trans March is an independent, DIY, community event. Please enhance, translate and pass this on to any groups, lists, or individuals who might be interested.

TRANSGENDER MOVEMENT EMERGING FROM SHADOWS

by Bonnie Miller Rubin
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO – Shawn Coleman bristles when an application poses the question “male or female?” – as if there are only two choices.

When it comes to sexual identity, the 23-year-old Shawn – born Patricia – sees a broad spectrum, a man-to-woman or a woman-to-man continuum with many stops along the way. Think gender without borders. He (the preferred pronoun) looks male but not completely. He is not a lesbian, a cross-dresser or contemplating a sex-change operation any time soon.

“I always knew I was different than other girls,” explained Coleman. “I was never a fan of Barbie but liked playing sports with my two older brothers. People were always telling me to act more feminine – that I should sit with my legs crossed – but I found that stuff incredibly difficult. It wasn’t the way I felt inside.”

A graduate student at Iowa State University, Coleman is a transgender young adult and at the forefront of a movement that some say represents a new edge of grass-roots activism. Frequently lumped together with gays and lesbians, who have not always been welcoming, transgender people are carving a separate profile and flexing new political clout from campuses to corporations.

Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose sexual identity differs from conventional expectations of what it means to be a man or a woman. It includes transsexuals, who have surgically moved from one sex to another. It includes those who have had electrolysis and take hormones. It also encompasses people like Coleman who identify and express themselves differently from the sex indicated on their birth certificates.

Because of the range of definitions and the stigma, reliable statistics are difficult to find. Pop culture has helped “trans” issues gain more visibility. Felicity Huffman’s performance in “TransAmerica” grabbed the headlines – and a “best actress” Oscar nomination – but “Rent” and “Breakfast on Pluto” included such characters last year as well. On the Sundance Channel, a documentary series called “Transgeneration” followed four college students who morphed from one sex to the other. VH1’s “Surreal Life” also features transgender celebrity Alexis Arquette.

The sports world, too, is seeing more fluidity. There’s Terri O’Connell, a male-to-female transsexual and the only NASCAR driver to compete as both a man (T.J. Hayes) and as a woman. Canadian cyclist Kristen Worley, who also changed from male to female, currently is vying for a spot in the 2008 Olympics. The International Olympic Committee allows transsexual athletes to compete if two years has elapsed since surgery. The NCAA is studying a similar proposal.

More visibility has fostered more understanding. “It used to be that when journalists called, the first question was about surgery,” said Mara Keisling, 46, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, who was born Mark and “transitioned” six years ago. “Now reporters are acknowledging the humanity.”

EAST BAY TRANSGENDER AA

Genderqueer, Transgendered, Transsexual, Twin-Spirited, LGBT. Speaker/Discussion/Meditation/Readings of AA approved literature. **Weekly – THURSDAYS – 8-9 PM.** 3989 Howe Street (Mandana House one block from Kaiser off Broadway), in Oakland, CA 94611.



Riki Wilchins, GenderPAC’s executive director, stands in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on March 30, 2006. Photo courtesy Knight Ridder Tribune

Seven states have transgender-inclusive anti-discrimination laws. Even the business world, while not exactly rolling out the welcome mat, is becoming more receptive. More than 100 major corporations – 40 in the last year alone – now include gender identity as part of their non-discrimination policies. That’s up from eight firms just five years ago.

Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, a human-rights group, held a benefit in Chicago recently, sponsored by such buttoned-down firms as IBM Corp., JP Morgan Chase and Citigroup. “It’s the next big social movement,” said Riki Wilchins, GenderPAC’s executive director. Wilchins compares these efforts to those waged by blacks in the 1960s, women in the ‘70s and gays and lesbians in the ‘80s.

Nowhere is the activity more evident than on the nation’s campuses. In 2003, students organized GenderPAC’s first youth chapters to help combat bullying and discrimination. Today, there are 40 campus chapters in 25 states. “More than 200 schools have reached out to us,” Wilchins said. “It just shows the breadth of interest right now.”

Veterans of the movement such as Wilchins, 53, who transitioned to female in 1978 but answers to either pronoun, are heartened by the growing acceptance. Attending a gay youth conference in Des Moines two years ago, Wilchins was greeted by more than 1,000 cheering, stomping “genderqueers,” an increasingly popular term used to refer to anything off the binary gender map. “All these kids were just so gender non-conforming and testing the limits,” Wilchins said. “I asked them, ‘How do you do this in Iowa?’ But kids always get there about 10 years before everyone else.”

One of those kids was Shawn Coleman, who says he had problems with only one roommate during college and that his mom considers this “a phase.” He currently favors close-cropped hair, baggy jeans and polo shirts purchased in men’s departments. Sometimes, he binds his chest with an ACE bandage to conceal the silhouette of breasts, but usually comfort wins out. No artifice can quite disguise the high-pitched giggle.

For Coleman, it’s as much about power as gender. “I feel more entitled as a guy... I have the right to be more aggressive, to do and say whatever I want,” said Coleman, who is living in Chicago’s Edgewater community while working on his master’s thesis in sociology.

Is sex-reassignment surgery in the future? “Not at all,” he says, without hesitation. “I am about so much more than anatomy.”

Movie Review

THE LADY IN QUESTION

Starring: Charles Busch, Rosie O'Donnell, Kathleen Turner

Director: John Catania, Charles D. Ignacio



**Review by Brent Ko
365Gay.com**

If anyone thought biographical documentaries are dull they'd better think again because once more Charles Busch has proved his critics wrong. And, if you don't know Busch, well - what kind of queer are you anyway.

Once dismissed as just another New York drag queen Busch transcended the campy clubs becoming an accomplished actress, playwright and novelist. Busch splashed onto the map in 1984 at the dingy Limbo Lounge as one of the burgeoning artists of New York's East Village arts scene.

His sex-charged, cross-dressing classic, Vampire Lesbians of Sodom became a theater phenomenon. It transferred from the Limbo Lounge to the Provincetown Playhouse and ran an unprecedented five years, securing its place as one of the longest-running shows in Off-Broadway history.

Vampire Lesbians of Sodom also marked the birth of one of New York's most memorable theatrical companies, Theater-in-Limbo, as Busch's legendary Limbo plays brought together an eclectic troupe of actors whose talents are on display in rare archival video footage.

In their first feature documentary Catania and Ignacio enter the world of this prolific, talented, and outrageous New York theater artist. The documentary begins in 2000 at the opening night of Busch's hit Broadway comedy, The Tale of The Allergist's Wife.

"I never knew the big bucks that could be made by exploiting your family," explains Busch. Lifted from years of eavesdropping on his own family drama, The Tale of The Allergist's Wife offers a window into Busch's traumatic, yet wildly creative childhood.



Having lost his mother at age seven, he reacts to this tragic event, as well the absence of his father, by immersing himself in a world of classic movies. Ignoring the demands of school, Busch watches movies day and night, preferring the black and white world of 1930's and 40's Hollywood to his own painful reality.

But expert knowledge of Hollywood was not enough to keep Busch from nearly flunking out of school. Swooping to the rescue was a real-life Auntie Mame figure in the form of his mother's oldest sister, Lillian Blum. Aunt Lillian saves the young Charles from the stifling suburbs and brings him to Manhattan where his creative appetites are finally sated.

Busch discovers his talents and he makes it through high school and then Northwestern University, but upon graduating is hit with a new harsh reality: his dream of being up on the stage is thwarted at every turn by theater directors who find him "too odd, too gay."

Busch says of this time, "If nobody else was going to put me in a play I decided I would have to get it done myself. So I became a writer so I would have the opportunity to act." So begins Busch's journey to become one of the most recognizable figures in New York theatre today.

Eventually after seven non-stop years, the legendary Theatre-in-Limbo is ripped apart by fatigue and AIDS, as several core family members are lost to the epidemic.

After a brush with death Busch rallies: in quick succession he writes the new Broadway book to a Rosie O'Donnell/Boy George musical; returns triumphantly to the Off-Broadway stage in his new play, Shanghai Moon; and stars in Die, Mommie, Die!, his first feature film as leading lady.

Catania and Ignacio lovingly follow Busch through his ups and downs and provide some fascinating interviews with friends and colleagues. The film is funny, poignant, and not to be missed.

Transcending Transgender

**Sponsored by
City of Refuge UCC Outreach Ministries**

A support group facilitated by Janetta Johnson and Portia Denard; Where: City of Refuge, United Church of Christ, 1025 Howard Street, San Francisco CA 94103, (415) 861-6130. When: Every Friday, 6 pm to 7:30 pm. Food and snacks will be provided.

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Advocate Series

TRANSAMERICA GETS REAL

In this first installment of *The Advocate's* exclusive new series, the author talks about how her wife, her gay male friends, and the movie *Transamerica* inspired her to reach out to you, our readers, to answer all your questions about being transgender, whether you were afraid to ask or not

**By Joanne A. Herman
The Advocate**



On February 11 I buried my wife of 30 years. A sad day, for sure, but also a remarkable one. Remarkable because Barbara and I had lovingly stayed together in spite of my transition from male to female in 2002. And especially remarkable because those last few years before her death were some of our best.

I've been told that only 20% of married couples survive the transition of a spouse from one sex to another. Some do so "for the kids" but in the absence of any real relationship. Some actually do stay friends, but without intimacy. Yet Barbara and I had it all!

But that's little comfort to me today—I miss her so.

I have always been attracted to and been more comfortable being around women. When I was 7 I used to get together with the neighborhood girls and try on their clothes. Once my parents learned of that, they made it abundantly clear that what I was doing was terribly wrong. I don't fault them for that—they were just being good, responsible parents of the 1950s. But their admonishment was so clear that it sent me into a period of heavy denial that did not end until the late 1990s, when I first saw another transgender woman and realized I was not alone.

Soon after reaching the point in 2002 where I could no longer live as a male, I started pondering what transition would mean for my sexual orientation. It didn't take long to figure out that I still liked women, regardless. That discovery led to one of my more embarrassing moments when I said to Barbara, "I've got great news. I'm a lesbian!" I was positively excited because I thought this fact would allow us to stay together. But my excitement evaporated in a flash when Barbara replied without hesitation, "Well, I've got bad news, dear. I'm not!"

But Barbara worked hard to understand. Imagine my emotions on Valentine's Day, only a few weeks after I had told her of my plans to transition from male to female, when she sent me roses! I'm so glad Barbara did give it a try, because along the way she discovered that she actually wanted to be intimate with me in my changed anatomy. Perhaps she was bi after all?

A recent Associated Press article referred to the groundbreaking movie *Transamerica* as "more of a healing family comedy than a threatening exploration of transgender issues." I recently went to see the movie with some of the gay guys from my church (to my knowledge, I'm the only transgender member of the congregation). They were happy to go, and it didn't hurt that Kevin Zegers was the costar either.

Afterward, over dinner, I answered one question after another about the movie, about being transgender, and about me and my wife. I guess that was the "threatening exploration" part. Yet it struck me that the guys were curious, not threatened, and had never had anyone else around to talk to about this stuff.

It's a familiar story for me. It started when I joined the board of directors of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders [a Boston-based nonprofit organization that focuses on litigating cases to advance LGBT equality]. GLAD's lawyers had already scored several victories for transgender rights, but there had never been a transgender presence on the board. As GLAD's first trans board member I was surprised at how welcome I felt and, more important, how anxious everyone was to learn more. When I became the first transgender member of the board of trustees of the Point Foundation, an organization that had already given scholarships to transgender students, I felt warmly welcomed again. And I continue to feel welcome elsewhere.

All of which leaves me believing that there is a lot of healthy curiosity and interest in understanding transgenderism—and few easy ways to do so short of going to the library. So I'm going to try in succeeding columns to cover all of those questions that you were "afraid to ask" and to do so in bite-size chunks. I hope that, like Barbara, you'll stay with me.

Herman is the first transgender member of the boards of the Point Foundation, a scholarship lifeline for LGBT students, and Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, the New England LGBT rights organization that brought same-sex marriage to Massachusetts. Find more information about these organizations at www.thepointfoundation.org and www.glad.org. Photo: Marilyn Humphries Photography

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Advocate Series

Part 2 of The Advocate's ongoing transgender series

WHAT'S IN A TRANS NAME?

Transsexual? Cross-dresser? Gender-queer? Under the "transgender" umbrella are a range of people who deal with gender identity and gender expression in nontraditional ways. A primer on who's who.

**By Joanne Herman
The Advocate**

Back in the 1980s, Billy Crystal's Fernando character on Saturday Night Live claimed, "It's not how you feel, it's how you look!" He was on the right track, except that how one feels can be equally important, as you will see.

What image comes to mind when someone says "transgender"? RuPaul? Klinger from the TV series *M*A*S*H*? Dr. Frank 'N' Furter from the movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*? Bree, Felicity Huffman's character in the movie *Transamerica*? Leslie Feinberg or Kate Bornstein?

These are all examples of people whose gender expression (how one looks) and gender identity (how one feels) can be problematic in a "pink or blue" society. Actually, "problematic" is an understatement. Every month more than one person is murdered just for being gender-nonconforming—and those are only the cases we know about. This grim figure represents a strikingly large percentage of a relatively small and little-known population.

In the late 1980s the word transgender was coined as an umbrella term to refer to all gender-variant people. That's one expansive umbrella! It covers drag queens and drag kings, cross-dressers, transsexuals, gender-queer people, and probably some others I don't even know about yet. Even some gay men and lesbians with nontraditional gender expressions may be protected by trans-inclusive nondiscrimination and employment laws.

Recognizing our common struggle for civil rights—and our common enemies—the gay and lesbian movement started adding the T in the mid 1990s. But my experience has shown that the average gay man or lesbian today knows very little about the transgender community and truly wants to know more.

So please allow me shed a little light on trans terminology.

RuPaul is probably the best known example of a "drag queen." "Drag kings"—women who perform in a male persona—are growing in popularity too; Heywood Wakefield is one example. (Drag originally meant "dressed as a girl," but for those dressing as a boy, drag didn't exactly draw an audience!) People who "do drag" do it for fun, entertainment, and sometimes to earn a livelihood. Drag queens and kings can be gay, straight, or bi, but few ever feel the need to medically transition genders as actress Alexis Arquette is doing. So, for the drag community, the issue is their right to their gender expression.

Klinger from *M*A*S*H* is a widely known example of a "cross-dresser," at least among those of my generation. People cross-dress for various reasons. In Klinger's case he was making a political statement. Dr. Frank 'N' Furter was doing it for fetishistic reasons. Women started wearing men's clothes awhile ago as a fashion statement, and today that is commonplace. But put a guy in a dress and it's still a huge deal! So men who have a yet-to-be-explained need to cross-dress often have to limit their dressing to the

privacy of their homes or to one of the various transgender conferences held around the country each year. Cross-dressers can also be gay, straight, or bi, but they don't feel the need to medically transition. Regardless of the reasons why they cross-dress, the issue is their right to their gender expression.

Bree (Felicity Huffman's character) is an example of a "transsexual," as am I. We represent the small part of the transgender population who feels so strongly about being the gender opposite of our 'original' sex organs that—if we can afford it—we take medical steps (hormone therapy and/or surgery) to bring our physical bodies (how we look) into alignment with our gender identity (how we feel).

Many others who have a strong contra-gender identity also "transition" to live in their preferred gender, using clothing, makeup, and mannerisms. These people are "transgender" instead of transsexual. Yes, you read correctly—medically transitioning is only important for a small number of people under the transgender umbrella. (More about that in a future column.)

I identify as a lesbian, but transsexual and transgender people can be lesbian, gay, bi, or straight. Our issue is our right to both our gender expression and gender identity.

Leslie Feinberg and Kate Bornstein are real-life examples of the balance of the transgender population. For them, the gender binary does not work for their daily lives, either in part or in the whole. It happens that both are writers, and Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* and Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw* are often included in college gender studies curricula these days because they encourage the reader to reconsider the entrenched gender binary.

Perhaps as a result of this, there is an increase in younger people coming out as "gender-queer," which is pretty much defined however the person wants. It can mean some of one gender and part of another, or even none of the above. Their issue is definitely their right to both their gender expression and gender identity.

So what about you? You likely don't consider yourself transgender. But is how you feel and how you look important to you? A butch lesbian does not think of herself as a man (identity) because of her look (expression), nor does a nelly gay man think of himself as a woman because of his actions.

So I say that, unlike what Billy Crystal's character purported, both how one feels and how one acts and looks is critical to one's self-definition. And regardless of whether you consider yourself transgender, we certainly have issues in common that give us a good reason to work together.

legal questions about gender?



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Bay Area Guardian Reprint

LIFE IN HELL

In California prisons, an unconventional gender identity can be like an added sentence

**By Tali Woodward
Bay Area Guardian**

Rosa casts her dark eyes downward and then looks up from under wispy bangs to say matter-of-factly, "I've been raped six times.

"At one time I was raped by five individuals," she continues in slightly tentative English.

Rosa wasn't born female, but she says she was very young when she realized "I was special." Today, she doesn't just "pass" as a woman — it's hard to imagine how anyone would see this person with the bewitching eyes and feather-soft voice as anything else.

Except that for the past eight years, Rosa has lived in men's prisons.

The way the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) sees it, Rosa has a penis, and that makes her a man. Never mind that she hasn't seen herself as male for decades, or that she's been taking feminizing hormones since her 16th birthday. Rosa, who is serving 15-to-life for stabbing a man she says was trying to kill her, was never able to afford sex-reassignment surgery. The one time she came close to saving enough money, she spent it helping her sister set up a fruit stand in Mexico. So the prison system put her in with the men.

Rosa, 37, isn't just out of place: In the hierarchical and hypermasculine world of a men's prison, she's the ultimate target. She's been insulted, degraded, and smacked around countless times. If another inmate is feeling feisty, he's likely to take it out on her. And if it's sex someone is craving, there are more than a few reasons he'd look to Rosa to satisfy his desires.

It is, of course, a difficult situation for prison officials: Many female inmates don't want to bunk with a person who has male genitalia. But putting Rosa, and perhaps as many as 200 other transgender inmates, in with the general population is a frightening prospect. Prison rape is common, and even straight men are vulnerable; for a person who identifies as a woman and has feminine looks and breasts, it's almost inevitable.

No matter how bad things have gotten, Rosa has never gone to prison administrators for help. Behind bars, the victims of rape are often treated as badly as the assailants are, locked in solitary confinement and denied even the very modest freedoms Rosa has come to cherish.

Still, Rosa believes she's lucky.

She's currently locked up in the California Medical Facility, in Vacaville, which is considered the most hospitable prison in the state for transgender prisoners. There have been some sympathetic staffers over the years, and a San Francisco doctor tries to get hormones to the inmates who want them. Most important, CMF's trans prisoners have each other — roughly 50 prisoners who refer to themselves as "the girls" or "family members."

"In a certain way," Rosa said, "I have survived here in prison — 'cause I haven't caught HIV; I haven't caught no disease; I haven't been stabbed. So far, I have survived a lot."

Recently, she's also been involved a nerve-racking but energizing project: developing a campaign that might compel the CDCR to change how it treats prisoners who don't conform to traditional gender roles.

Of course, activism is a little trickier when you're behind bars, and the prisoners have reason to believe there will be repercussions for their efforts. Nonetheless, some agreed to tell their stories — on the condition that their real names not be used.

A Silent Crisis

Transgender women are more likely to end up in prison than virtually anyone else. The oft-quoted statistic about African American men — that one in four has a history of incarceration — is dwarfed by the available stats on people who are male-to-female, or MTF. A San Francisco Department of Public Health survey conducted in 1997 found that almost two thirds of MTF respondents had been incarcerated. More than 30 percent had spent some time behind bars during the preceding 12 months.

Most people agree that the high incarceration rate is due mainly to the difficulty trans people have finding and keeping work [see "Transjobless," on page 17]. To survive, they often turn to sex work, drug dealing, or other illegal forms of moneymaking — and, in the process, greatly increase their risk of arrest.

"As long as trans people have been excluded from the legal economy, they've been in prison," says Alexander Lee, an attorney who founded the Oakland-based Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex Justice Project.

There's no official count of how many California inmates are trans, but Lee, who has had contact with about 80 prisoners in the past couple years, estimates there are probably 200 transgender inmates throughout the state penal system — and at least another thousand who are gender variant, meaning they bend traditional gender roles in some way. (This includes particularly masculine women or effeminate men.) Prisoners are far more likely to be MTF than FTM.

Housing Quandries

In interviews and signed accounts reviewed by the Guardian, California's trans prisoners report numerous challenges. But their primary complaints are about rampant sexual assault — and the system's apparent tolerance for it.

Ele Tsu is a Native American who was adopted by a Los Angeles couple at birth. "Growing up, I had this feeling of femininity," she told us. "But I never expressed it. I would look at girls and say, 'Gee, Mom, how come she gets to wear a dress and I don't?'"

For many years, Ele Tsu lived as a man. She got married, joined the Mormon Church, and had several kids. She worked for a telecommunications company and describes herself as a "workaholic." But then she had a nervous breakdown and "picked up a homicide." She pleaded no-contest and was sentenced to 25-to-life. She came out as transgender while in prison and has been in CMF off and on since 1984.

Prison housing policies, Ele Tsu says, can set the stage for the sexual abuse of trans prisoners, particularly those who have breasts, as she does.

"Would you put your daughter in a locked room with 11 or 12 men and say, 'Fend for yourself?'" she asks.

Ele Tsu now lives in a cell but says that when she was assigned to a dorm, "I was lucky if I could have one or two nights a week where I wasn't bothered.

"Sometimes I would wake up with somebody's hands going up my pants or massaging my breasts. Or something would brush up against my lips — and it was a fully erect penis."

But molestation isn't limited to the dorms.

At one point Rosa was assigned to a cell with a "60-something-year-old man [who] claimed to be Christian." She says her cellmate repeatedly touched her in the middle of the night. She was confident she could have beaten him off, but she was similarly convinced he would report it — and she would end up in a rougher, higher-security prison.

Rosa says she tried, and failed, to get prison staff to intervene. Only after her cellmate kicked her was she moved out — and into a dorm.

She says her dorm situation is better than most. For one thing, there's a gay prisoner in her unit. Also, she's been romantically involved with a "respected" inmate for three years. She says even though he lives elsewhere, the relationship offers her more than a modicum of protection.

Still, Rosa points out, "There's no privacy in there — you live in a dorm with 11 individuals ... I have to cover myself to put my bra on."

"Rapes occur with frequency," Ele Tsu told us. "And we've learned to keep our big mouths shut because what happens is we are victimized again. We're called liars; people say, 'You enticed them, you didn't have your bra on, you were dressed in an overly feminine condition. You asked for it.'"

When sexual assault is reported, inmates say, the victim and the perpetrator get the same treatment: Both are locked up in Administrative Segregation, or Ad Seg.

Prison officials point say this is partly to protect the victim. Dr. Joseph Bick, the chief medical officer at CMF, expressed surprise at inmates' stories of sexual assault, saying, "I've never had a patient, in 13 years, disclose to me that they've been sexually assaulted here." But he added that given the realities of prison assaults throughout the country, "I would be putting my head in the sand if I said there had never been a sexual assault within [the state prison system] or at the California Medical Facility." He defended the policies of putting a prisoner in protective custody after he or she reports an assault: "We have an immediate responsibility to make sure that doesn't happen again."

But the realities of Ad Seg — an 8-by-10-foot cell with only a mattress and blanket, no work or school, less than two hours a day outside of the cell — make it an intolerable prospect for many inmates.

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Bay Area Guardian Reprint

TRANSJOBLESS

Imagine trying to find a job without a shred of work history. Welcome to the transgender job hunt.

**By Tali Woodward
Bay Area Guardian**

In the transgender community, to have full-time work is to be in the minority. In fact, a new survey of 194 trans people conducted by the Transgender Law Center (TLC), with support from the Guardian, found that only one out of every four respondents has a full-time job. Another 16 percent work part-time.

What's more, 59 percent of respondents reported an annual salary of less than \$15,333. Only 4 percent reported making more than \$61,200, which is about the median income in the Bay Area.

In other words, more than half of local transgender people live in poverty, and 96 percent earn less than the median income. Perhaps it shouldn't be surprising that 40 percent of those surveyed don't even have a bank account.

TLC doesn't claim the study is strictly scientific — all respondents were identified through trans organizations or outreach workers. But the data give a fairly good picture of how hard it is for transgender people to find and keep decent jobs, even in the city that is supposed to be most accepting of them.

It's been more than a decade since San Francisco expanded local nondiscrimination laws to cover trans people, but transphobic discrimination remains rampant. Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents said they've experienced some form of employment discrimination.

And interviews show that job woes are hardly straightforward.

Navigating the job-application process after a gender transition can be extraordinarily difficult. Trans people run up against fairly entrenched biases about what kind of work they're suited for. Sometimes those who are lucky enough to find work can't tolerate insensitive, or even abusive, coworkers.

Marilyn Robinson turned tricks for almost 20 years before she decided to look for legal employment. She got her GED and, eventually, a job at an insurance company. The first six months went OK, but then a supervisor "thought he had the right to call me RuPaul," she told us. "And I look nothing like RuPaul." Suddenly the women in the office refused to use the bathroom if Robinson was around. She left within a month.

Once again, Robinson was on the job hunt. She interviewed for a receptionist position, and thought it went well. But on her way out, she saw the interviewer toss her application into the trash with a giggle. "The reality is, even a hoagie shop in the Castro — they might not hire you," she said.

Still, many activists say the increased attention being paid to trans employment issues is promising.

Cecelia Chung from the Transgender Law Center told us there's a "silver lining" in the effort the "community is putting into really changing the playing field. We're in a really different place than we were five years ago."

Activists say true progress will require broad education efforts and the cooperation of business owners throughout the Bay Area. But the project is well under way, with San Francisco Transgender Empowerment, Advocacy and Mentorship, a trans collaborative, hosting its second annual Transgender Job Fair March 22. More than a dozen employers have signed up for the fair, including UCSF, Goodwill Industries, and Bank of America.

Hurdles

Imagine trying to find a job with no references from previous employers. Now envision how it might feel to have an interviewer look at you askance — or even ask if you've had surgery on a fairly private part of your body. These are just a couple of the predicaments trans job-seekers face.

Kenneth Stram runs the Economic Development Office at the San Francisco LGBT Community Center. "In San Francisco there are the best intentions," he told us. "But when you scratch the surface, there are all these procedural hurdles that need to be addressed." As examples, he pointed to job-training classes where fellow students may act hostile, or arduous application processes.

Giving a prospective employer a reference may seem like a fairly straightforward task, but what if your old employer knew an employee of a different gender? Do you call the old boss and announce your new identity? Even if he or she is supportive, experience can be hard to erase. Will the manager who worked with Jim be able to speak convincingly about Jeanine? And what about your work history — should you eliminate the jobs where you were known as a different gender?

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Life in Hell...

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"There's many of us who are willing to come forward and prosecute," says Ele Tsu, who has personally complained to prison officials about the sexual assault problem. "But the state won't go for it."

Abuse And Care

The most common issue for TG prisoners, however, seems to be simple harassment.

"They treat you like 'that,' 'it,' or 'whatever he is,'" Rosa said of her fellow inmates. She's usually referred to as "he" and often called a "fag-got," despite her womanly bearing and the fact that she is involved with an inmate who considers himself straight. There's a general attitude that "you decided to be like this, [you] brought it upon yourself," Rosa says. "Nah — I didn't choose to be rejected. I didn't choose to be humiliated. I didn't choose to be beat up. I didn't choose to be raped."

According to some, harassment is just as likely to come from prison staff. Lee says different people in different prisons have told him the guards will routinely demean them — over the PA system.

TG inmates can also get in trouble for expressing what they feel is their rightful gender. Grooming standards require them to keep their hair short and, in some facilities, makeup is even considered contraband. If prisoners can't buy cosmetics, some will resort to crushing brick or colorful pages from magazines in order to make it themselves.

Prisoners say CMF has never provided bras to trans inmates with hormone-induced breasts. A few years ago, inmates were allowed to buy and wear them. Now sometimes inmates need the equivalent of a prescription from the medical staff. "Since when is a bra a medical device?" Ele Tsu asks.

But when it comes to medicine, CMF prisoners admit they're at a real advantage.

In 1999 former California inmate Torey South won damages from the CDCR for preventing her from continuing hormone treatments when she was transferred from CMF to California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo. Abruptly stopping hormone treatment can cause vomiting, dizziness, and serious mental health problems.

Trans advocates say that despite the clear legal mandate in the South case, access to trans care is still spotty throughout the prison system. But CMF has a reputation for providing the same kind of medical attention that a trans person might get outside of prison.

San Francisco General Hospital's Dr. Lori Kohler, who is a specialist in trans care, travels to Vacaville every six weeks to make sure trans-identified inmates are getting their hormones.

"There was a lot of resistance to this work when I got there," in 1999, Kohler told us. Other doctors "wouldn't renew my orders and wouldn't send patients to see me."

Today, she said, the access problems she sees within the prison system are similar to those she sees outside. "It's a big mark on our society that we're doing such a bad job of including [transgender people]," she said. But she is hopeful about new CDCR guidelines on trans care now in the works.

Chief medical officer Bick noted that trans inmates do not have access to sex-reassignment surgery, but that even the provision of hormones has been controversial. He defended the practice, however, saying, "It is essential for a society to be concerned about the health of those it chooses to incarcerate."

Both doctors stressed that appropriate care can have a huge impact on the lives of inmates once they leave prison.

"Providing access to hormones and acknowledging someone's identity can improve quality of life and [reduce] chances for reoffense," Kohler said.

Campaign For Safety

The prison system, it appears, is utterly, perhaps willfully, unprepared for dealing with trans inmates. In the 204-page document that lays out California prison regulations, there is no mention of "transgender,"

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HIDDEN PAST, HOPEFUL FUTURE FOR TRANS ATHLETES

Canadian Cyclist Shares Her Struggle To Be Recognized As A Woman

By Elizabeth Chuck, Reporter
MSNBC



Photo by: Keith Langdon,
Remember When Images

Transsexual Kristen Worley has been recognized as a female athlete by international and Canadian cycling groups and hopes to compete in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

Kristen Worley, a 2008 Olympic hopeful in cycling, has a secret. But now, with great anxiety, she's divulging it.

A few years ago, the Canadian had sex-change surgery to change her gender from male to female. With the help of a steady regimen of estrogen, Worley looks female, sounds female and, to anybody who didn't know her before, is female.

Worley has told her story to sports organizations across Canada in her quest to get permission to compete in the Olympics, but she spoke for the first time publicly in an interview with MSNBC.com. "I shouldn't be worrying about what people are going to do when they find out, but I'm so afraid," she said. "I'm just like any other girl there."

Major Milestone For Olympics

If Worley competes in the Beijing Games in 2008, it will be a milestone in Olympics history. There have been rumors of transsexual athletes participating in the Games, but none has ever come forward.

The International Olympics Committee officially changed its rules for transsexual people in 2004. To compete, an athlete must wait for two years after sex-reassignment surgery. People who have had the surgery differ on how they want to be known. Worley refers to herself as a transitioned athlete, while others call themselves transsexuals. Although the new Olympics rule hasn't been put to the test yet, the transsexual community says it has already benefited from it.

"It set a precedent for other organizations," said Helen Carroll, sports project coordinator for the San Francisco-based National Center for Lesbian Rights. "The U.S. Track and Field Organization has adopted rules very similar to the IOC ruling. Australia and Europe changed their professional women's golf rules so that Mianne Bagger could compete."

First Male-To-Female Golfer

Bagger, 39, is the first male-to-female golfer to play professionally. The Danish woman was barred from the professional circuit when she had sex-reassignment surgery in 1995, but finally won admission in late 2004.

"It was lucky for me that the announcement from the IOC came out at a time when golf tours were reviewing their rules following my request to play in them," Bagger said in an interview with MSNBC.com.

Danish golfer Mianne Bagger was cleared to compete professionally as a woman golfer in 2004.

Olympics historian David Wallechinsky cited only a few widely known cases in which gender has been an issue. Hermann Ratchet, who competed as a woman named Dora in the 1936 Games, finished fourth in the high jump. Two years later, Ratchet was barred from competition when it was learned that he was born with male and female reproductive organs.

More recently, Brazilian Edinanci Silva competed in the women's Olympic judo competition in 1996, finishing seventh. She caused controversy when she revealed that upon reaching puberty, she also had both male and female sex organs. But Silva had her male reproductive organs removed three years prior to competing, and ultimately was allowed to continue in women's judo.

Bagger and Worley aren't entirely happy with the new IOC rule. Instead of helping them to fit in with other athletes, the policy forces them to stand out, they say. "They've marginalized a group of people that are already marginalized in society," Worley said. "They are forcing transitioned athletes to come out publicly to compete."

'Rather Just Blend In'

Bagger says instead of getting attention for her golf scores, she is more often interviewed because of her sex change.

"It's been difficult because in the media, people generally have been exposed to the extremes: drag queens or an overt characterization of something.

We all get lumped into one group," she said. "People in general don't get to see people with this condition. It's really only the ones who attract attention, but why would anyone want to subject themselves to that? You would rather just blend in with society."

Bagger says she wants her main message to be: "I'm a good golfer — you've got to play bloody good to beat me."

Worley, still fearful about revealing her past, was reluctant to give her age, where she grew up and other details of her life.

She described herself growing up as a kid who had "all the opportunities in the world" but who always felt uncomfortable as a male. "In my late teens, I said to myself, 'I have to deal with this. I'm in trouble.' There was a point in my life where death seemed like a more positive place," Worley said.

In addition to undergoing surgery and waiting two years, the IOC policy requires an athlete to be legally recognized in his or her new gender. Worley has been validated as a female athlete by the Europe-based Union Cycliste Internationale — the international body of cycling — and the Canadian Cycling Association, and has obtained her international cycling license.

Brett Stewart, director of domestic programs and development for the Canadian Cycling Association, said his organization looked at Worley's medical and legal documentation and compared it to the International Olympics Committee's requirements. "Based on that, it was our determination that she be granted status as a female athlete and we were able to give her domestic freedom to compete in cycling," Stewart said. "With the process that is in place, she is considered to have female status."

Because she was only recently recognized to compete as a woman, Worley is not a ranked cyclist yet. But in her own estimation, she has "a very good chance" of qualifying for the 2008 Games.

No Actual Advantage?

Perhaps the biggest hurdle facing the athletes is convincing critics that male-to-female transsexuals do not have a physical advantage over their competitors.

"It's the age-old phenomenon of people fearing what they don't know," said Jill Pilgrim, general counsel and director of business affairs for USA Track and Field Inc., who teamed up with a physician to do research on transsexual athletes. "When a male-to-female transsexual undergoes hormone therapy, they are reducing their testosterone levels and taking female hormones. They lose muscle mass, which is the advantage testosterone gives you."

Pilgrim said she believes the only sport in which men-to-women transsexuals might have an advantage is swimming, because these athletes gain body fat, which assists buoyancy. "We haven't seen a huge record of Renee Richards taking off with everything [in tennis] and Mianne Bagger winning all the golf circuits," Carroll said.

Renee Richards, formerly Richard Raskind, sued the United States Tennis Association in 1976 for barring her from the U.S. Open. Richards later won the case, making her the first transsexual tennis player to compete.

Pilgrim said transsexuals who compete as men face a more problematic situation because they take testosterone, which is illegal under normal Olympic rules. These athletes can expect to be closely monitored to assure they are taking the appropriate amount of testosterone for their height and weight, Pilgrim said.

Slow Acceptance

Carroll compared the struggle facing transsexual athletes to the gay and lesbian movement 20 years ago. "People don't understand who a transgendered person is at all. It's not about their sexual orientation," she said. "It's about how they feel pertaining to gender. That's a hard thing to wrap your head around."

Worley said she's waiting for a backlash among fellow cyclists after going public with her sex change. But she added: "This could not be a more important issue — for sport and for society."

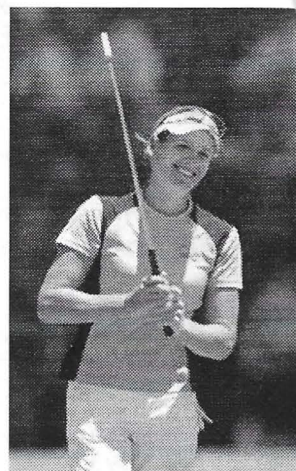


Photo by: Heather
Faulkner / AFP/Getty
Images file

Most trans people can't make it through the application process without either outing themselves or lying.

Marcus Arana decided to face this issue head-on and wrote about his transition from living as a woman to living as a man in his cover letter. "It became a matter of curiosity," Arana told us. "I would have employers ask about my surgical status."

It took him a year and a half to find a job. Fortunately, it's one he loves. Arana investigates most complaints of gender identity-related discrimination that are made to San Francisco's city government. (Another investigator handles housing-oriented complaints.)

When he started his job, in 2000, about three quarters of the complaints Arana saw were related to public accommodations — a transwoman had been refused service at a restaurant, say, or a bank employee had given a cross-dressing man grief about the gender listed on his driver's license.

Today, Arana told us, at least half of the cases he looks into are work-related — something he attributes to both progress in accommodations issues and stagnation on the job front. TG workers, he said, confront two common problems: resistance to a changed name or pronoun preference and controversy over which bathroom they use.

The name and pronoun problems can often be addressed through sensitivity training, though Arana said that even in the Bay Area, it's not unheard of for some coworkers to simply refuse to alter how they refer to a trans colleague.

Nine out of ten bathroom issues concern male-to-female trans folk — despite the fact that the police department has never gotten a single report of a transwoman harassing another person in a bathroom. One complaint Arana investigated involved a woman sticking a compact mirror under a bathroom stall in an effort to see her trans coworker's genitalia.

But a hostile workplace is more often made up of dozens of subtle discomforts rather than a single drama-filled incident.

Robinson told us the constant whispering of "is that a man?" can make an otherwise decent job intolerable: "It's why most of the girls — and I will speak for myself — are prostitutes. Because it's easier."

The second and third most common forms of work-related discrimination cited by respondents in the TLC survey were sexual harassment and verbal harassment.

But only 12 percent of those who reported discrimination also filed some kind of formal complaint. That may be because of the widespread feeling that doing so can make it that much harder to keep a job — or find another one. Mara Keisling, director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, in Washington, DC, said that "it's a common understanding within the transgender community that when you lose your job, you generally lose your career."

Another Kind Of Glass Ceiling

Most of the trans people we spoke to expressed resentment at being tracked into certain jobs — usually related to health care or government.

Part of that is because public entities have been quicker to adopt nondiscriminatory policies. San Francisco city government created a splash in 2001 when it granted trans employees access to full health benefits, including sex-reassignment surgery. The University of California followed suit last year.

But it's also because of deeply ingrained prejudices about what kind of work transgender people are suited to.

Claudia Cabrera was born in Guatemala but fled to the Bay Area in 2000 to get away from the constant insults and occasional violence that befell her. Despite her education in electrical engineering and business and 13 years of tech work, it was difficult for her to find a job — even after she was granted political asylum. In 2002 a local nonprofit she had originally turned to for help offered her a position doing outreach within the queer community.

Cabrera doesn't make much money, and she sends some of it back to her two kids in Guatemala. But that's not the only reason she would like another job. She wants to have broader responsibilities and to employ her tech savvy. "There is a stereotype here in San Francisco [that] transgender folk are only good for doing HIV work — or just outreach in general," she said.

Whenever she's gotten an interview for another kind of job, she's been told she is overqualified. Does she believe that's why she hasn't been hired? "No," she laughed. But she also acknowledged, "Even though there is discrimination going on here, this is the safest city for me to be in."

Cabrera is now on the board of TLC and is working to create more job opportunities for herself and others in the trans community. She often repeats this mantra: "As a transsexual woman, I am not asking for anything that doesn't belong to me. I am demanding my rights to live as a human being."

"transsexual," "gender dysphoria," "transvestite," or "cross-dresser." There is one incidence of "homosexual" — it says that an inmate's orientation may require a special housing placement.

Corrections spokesperson Terry Thornton told us she looked for the relevant policies but wasn't able to locate them by our deadline.

Ele Tsu, Rosa, and a handful of other gay and trans prisoners at CMF are pushing for action — with an optimism that is hard to reconcile with their situation.

The group initially came together in 2004, and with some support from prison staff, they drew up a reform proposal. They had a series of meetings with administrators, including, eventually, the warden. Then, in January 2005, there was a change in prison leadership and the project was sidelined.

Eventually, that fall, members of the group contacted a local grassroots group called Trans/Gender-Variant in Prison Committee for help. Since then, with support from TIP and from Lee, the committee has focused on getting CMF to change the process for investigating reports of sexual assault. They want those who report it to be kept out of Ad Seg and placed instead in a single cell during the course of the investigation. If their suggestions are taken, they would affect any prisoner reporting an assault — not just those who are queer.

"There needs to be a system that protects all inmates, regardless of our sexual orientation, gender identity, race, etc.," one inmate wrote in a statement. "I should not suffer more because a sexually violent predator [sic] decided to assault me."

"We recognize as a fact of life that those who do not fit a gender stereotype are going to be vulnerable," Assemblyperson Mark Leno said.

Leno also said that he is encouraged that the Prison Rape Elimination Act, which went into effect this year, will require more safety training of prison staff throughout the state. But, he pointed out, "the bigger picture is that the entire prison system is in meltdown."

It's not impossible to develop sensitive policies for dealing with incarcerated transgender people. In San Francisco, the Sheriff's Department has beefed up sensitivity training, by all accounts greatly improving the environment. According to Undersheriff Jan Dempsey, the jails now try to refer to prisoners by their preferred pronouns and let them do their hair and makeup as they wish. Although the jails also house prisoners according to their genitalia, when possible, they put all the trans women together in one dorm. "It'd be nice if we had a third housing option, but we don't," Dempsey said.

The jails also turn to trans community groups when they need help. "It's an ongoing thing; we're not perfect by any stretch," Dempsey acknowledged. "[But] I think the training has probably helped a lot."

The CMF prisoners don't expect such flexibility from the CDCR — at least not immediately. In fact, they expect they will be punished for trying to change things.

Ele Tsu believes she's already suffered retaliation. For a few months after a visit from TIP, she lost her job in the jail hospice, which she says "tore my soul out." Then right after Lee wrote a letter to the warden summarizing Ele Tsu's concerns about sexual assault, she was told she might soon be shipped off to another prison — possibly San Quentin. After TIP, the American Civil Liberties Union and others wrote letters saying the threat appeared retaliatory, it subsided.

Prison officials said the whole thing was part of a system-wide reorganization, but Ele Tsu is not persuaded.

When we met, she made several slightly wicked jokes about what awaits her — but she didn't dwell on it. Nothing's going to change, she told me, "Until the public or the courts step in and say, 'You're not going to do this anymore.'" *

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TRANSGENDER TEEN'S LIFE As A TV MOVIE

Chip Johnson
SF Chronicle

The life of Gwen Araujo, the Newark boy who identified and lived as a girl and was killed because of it, is being made into a TV movie by Lifetime. That may seem like a racy topic for a network whose forte is family stories — and is most popular in the American heartland — but network executives believe it's high time the story of Gwen, and those like her, be told from a family's point of view.

"Even in the 21st century, society is still separated by race, religion and gender," Zev Braun, the movie's executive producer, said in a statement. "It's time those walls be taken down and for people to be accepted for who and what they are — human beings."

Araujo's story is well-known in the Bay Area. She was killed by men who'd had sex with her and were shocked to discover, weeks later, that she was biologically male. The killing drew nationwide attention to transgender youth, and there's little left to say about the crime.

Instead, "For the Love of a Child" will focus on Sylvia Guerrero's relationship with Gwen, which is nothing more than the timeless story of every mother's relationship with her child. The story had everything the network looks for when considering a script, said Trevor Walton, the network's senior vice president for original films. "It has all the components that make a Lifetime movie: compassion, redemption and family issues," he said. "What a great story."

That's not to say the idea didn't raise a few eyebrows. But Walton saw a compelling film. "When it was first read here, there were one or two people who said, 'This is different,'" Walton said.

The movie, scheduled for broadcast in June, follows Gwen's life from her early years as Eddie Araujo, the second of four children in a close-knit Latino family, who seemed most comfortable dressing and acting like a girl. As a teen, Eddie — much to the shock of his siblings — began wearing makeup, growing his hair long and referring to himself as "Gwen," after the singer Gwen Stefani, whom he adored, and identifying as a young woman.

That created tension at home, especially among Gwen's siblings, who didn't understand why their brother wanted to be their sister. "It was hard for the younger boys, but it wasn't an easy transition for any of us," Guerrero said. "But I love my baby whether it was Eddie or Gwen."

And, of course, Gwen's siblings did too. And that's part of the message Lifetime — which bills itself as "television for women" — hopes to convey. "When you encounter someone or something different outside your own home, it's easy to make a sweeping judgment," said Walton. "But when it's your sister or your daughter or your son and there is something different, sexually or otherwise, compassion and love wins out. That's a large part of what this movie is: learning to understand."

To help viewers understand, Lifetime will air a public service announcement developed with Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the nation's largest family support organization for gay and transgender people. "I do believe in my heart that we're far from educating this world," Guerrero said. "It's a life sentence for us to have lost her, she's never coming home, no matter what we do, and I don't want this to happen to another family."

Make Your Money Count!

To support transgender education work: **Gwen Araujo Transgender Education Fund** c/o Horizons Foundation, 870 Market St. Suite, 728, San Francisco, CA 94102 • (415) 398-2333 / www.horizonsfoundation.org



By showing the internal family struggle for acceptance — the side of the issue most people never see — Lifetime hopes to raise awareness among all viewers. But it's one thing to tell Gwen's story to people in the Bay Area. Is the rest of the country ready to see it?

Lifetime thinks so. After all, a mother's love for her child no matter what is universal. Everyone can relate to it. And while Lifetime's core viewers — those in the Midwest — may not be as tolerant of, or familiar with, gay and transgender people, they are no less compassionate than those who are, Walton said.

"When we've done these kinds of movies in the past, like a lesbian couple in a custody battle, a lot of that audience says they've never met a lesbian couple, but understand it within the context of a family, like 'What would I think if that were my sister?'" Walton said.

Lifetime and P-FLAG also hope "For the Love of a Child" also will show people the difficulty transgender teens often face living in a world of harassment, cruelty and, too often, violence.

After all, the saddest part of the story is that Gwen's story isn't that unusual. Her picture is among [hundreds of] other transgender people whose pictures appear on a Web site maintained by the support group Gender Education and Advocacy, people who were slain simply because someone could not look past biology to see the person within.

Gwen was beaten to death by four men who were shocked, and undoubtedly frightened, to discover the young woman that some of them had had sex with was biologically male. Such a visceral reaction is almost exclusively male, and there has been little effort to change the conditioning, said Barrie Thorne, chair of the Gender and Women's Studies Department at UC Berkeley.

If being a man in the masculine sense in our society is really about displaying physical strength, perhaps we need to revisit some of our other basic beliefs, like using that strength to protect the weakest among us, not using it to intimidate, terrorize and kill them.

And maybe seeing "For the Love of a Child" will help some of us do that.

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