



The Newsletter of Transgenderist's Independence Club, Albany, NY

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - Winnie [REDACTED]

Everyone I have spoken to says Gina did a good job in putting out our newsletter last month. She has promised to do it again next month. Thank you, Gina. Meanwhile, I'm back on the job for this May issue.

IFGE CONVENTION

The 10th Annual IFGE Convention in Minneapolis, called **Minnesota Pride Celebration**, benefitted from a strong cooperative partnership between IFGE and the local organizations during planning and execution. Attendance was up over last year, the seminars were interesting, and the finances stayed in the black. My main criticism is that the program schedule was not announced until the meeting began.

I flew to Minneapolis on Sunday, March 24 between snowstorms the night before and the night after. Luckily, Minneapolis has a multitude of "Skywalks" connecting the second floors of many downtown buildings, so I went window shopping in comfort on Monday, looking out the windows to watch the bulldozers pushing a foot of snow onto the sidewalks below. The whole city seems like one huge mall. I met a new friend from the boondocks of Minnesota, who had just "come out" at the Texas T-Party in February and was surprised to learn that there was another TG event in her home state a month later! So, on Tuesday she drove us to the *Mall of America* in the suburbs, the largest mall in the USA, with an amusement park in the middle. Imagine, Crossgates, Colonie Center, and all the other malls in this area, all rolled into one - Mall Rat Heaven! I guess there's not much else to do during Winter in Minnesota, unless one ice-fishes like a Grumpy Old Man.

The convention seminars began on Wednesday afternoon and continued through Saturday. I was involved with meetings of the Congress of Transgender Organizations (CTO) and the IFGE Board; both of these groups are now functioning more smoothly than in some previous years. The highlight of the convention was the Awards banquet on Saturday, with a gorgeous drag show put on by the *Imperial Sovereign Court of the Ice Castle*, featuring lavish costumes. While there were only three Trinity Awards this year, there were two new *Partners in Diversity Awards* given to businesses that include transgender in their non-discrimination policies; these went to American Airlines and the State of Minnesota. Thankfully, the speeches were short and dancing began on schedule.

Next year, the IFGE Convention will be held in conjunction with *California Dreamin'* on the Queen Mary in Long Beach. I crossed the Atlantic on the Queen Mary in 1950, and was seasick most of the time, though I enjoyed playing Canasta in the Tourist Lounge. Now that the ship does not move, maybe I can enjoy it more.

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SUNYA LGBT CONFERENCE

The detailed planning by Katherine Hawkins and others came to fruition on Saturday, April 20 at the Lesbian, Gay, Bi, & TG Conference on the campus of SUNY Albany. Over a dozen TGIC and Tri-Ess members participated. We met at the TGIC Club Room at 10 a.m. for final preparations, and Katherine picked up Riki Ann Wilchins from NYC at the Amtrak station. During a sandwich lunch, Riki answered questions and described the activities of the *Transexual Menace*. Proceeding to the campus, we set up our display table with hand outs outside of the lecture hall.

The hall filled up with a mainly lesbian and gay audience for the TG caucus hour starting at 3 pm. On the panel were Riki, Katherine, Monica, and a representative from the East Coast Female-to-Male Group in Northampton, MA. Forgive me if I have missed someone; I stayed outside to watch our table, and the program is in the club room while I'm typing this at home. Anyway, their talks were punctuated with rounds of applause, and many questions were asked, continuing after the formal session ended. After refreshments at JB's Playhouse, five of us returned to the campus for the dinner event. We must thank Katherine, Vicki, and Frieda for donations to support expenses, and Tina for her artwork. It was very successful networking for us; we will have to do it again next year.

DINNER PARTIES

Once again, our dinner party in April was cancelled due to lack of interest; with a long string of cancellations, our momentum of enthusiasm seems to be lost. I will no longer try to promote them in this column, but will continue to list the second Saturday of each month as a dinner date on our Calendar, if enough people sign up by the previous Thursday night.

TGIC BUSINESS MEETING APRIL 11

A major topic of discussion at our business meeting was possible improvements in the Club Room facilities, particularly construction of new closets in the bathroom or elsewhere. We also need to find room for more bookcases and more seating. Since our space is tightly limited, some ingenuity is required. Ed volunteered to chair a committee to study the problem, and brought

his tape measure to begin the details. If any of you have ideas for what we might do, please call him: Ed [REDACTED].

We deferred a decision on purchasing new books for our library, a TV & VCR until the space problem is settled. Regarding the formation of special interest groups, Katherine offered to organize a wives' support group and Jennifer may try again to form a TS group. There were no hands put up to run for any office or director, so we are stuck with the old gang. The following dues structure was approved:

MEMBER CLASS	DUES \$/yr
Newsletter Subscriber	20
General Member	40
Couple Members	45
Key only	120
Key with attic storage	180
Key with small closet (1)	360
Key with large closet (4)	480

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION JAN 1996

Current members	56
Potential members	13
Friends	9
Professionals	20
Clubs & magazines	41
TOTAL	139

TGIC

PO Box 13604, Albany, NY 12212-3604
(518) 436-4513 (live Thurs. 8-10 pm)

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

TGIC Officers

President	Winnie [REDACTED]
Vice President	Joan [REDACTED]
Secretary	Joyce [REDACTED]
Treasurer	Winnie [REDACTED]
Newsletter Editor	Winnie [REDACTED]

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

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TGIC General Membership Dues: \$40/yr

Vanessa's Journal

A club dinner last fall afforded me the opportunity to meet several members. One particularly attractive young lass caught my attention, not because of her curves and curly chestnut hair nor her pretty full face and radiant complexion, but because of her apparent unease with the situation and the troubled look on her face. Of great concern to her was how she could earn a living as a transgender person. I couldn't help her at the time, but I did wonder how a nice girl like that could land a job free of any discrimination.

In the months since that idyllic night on Lake Saratoga, thrilling for me since it was my first time out with the girls for dinner, I had some good experiences that have enabled me to put forth the thesis that being your own boss is the answer.

I desperately needed some kind soul to honestly tell me if what I was putting on my face added or subtracted from the image I had for myself. Letting my fingers do the walking I saw a half dozen Mary Kay consultants listed. Why not give a call? I knew a little about the company and the skin care and beauty products but didn't know too much about the people. Linda, my first call, could see me that evening. Wow, what a response! To say I wasn't nervous would be less than truthful. That evening, happened to be the eve of the club's Christmas Party. During that delightful consultation, I learned a lot about myself and how I should be treating my face. The skin care and a little dash of glamour pleased me a great deal. But more than that, it was the confidence this vivacious can-do lady instilled in me.

Leaving her that evening, I, with firm resolve, radiant glow, and pretty red dress, drove straight to Albany. The day of the party, I leisurely practiced some of Linda's techniques, enjoyed a day of shopping, and took a delightful lunch at the Troy Brewing Company. I had been in need of some self-affirmation, certainly self-confidence, without which I was quite limited in what I could do. I feel this experience was a quantum leap in my growth curve. Linda also showed me how one could be an independent consultant. Mary Kay affords anyone an opportunity to run their own business.

I have visited Linda regularly since then, each time gaining confidence and a great deal of knowledge on how to treat my face and skin. I will be a hostess for a skin care seminar in two weeks and will attend a meeting next week with about 150 women, their spouses and friends at a large hotel on Long Island. I believe that this particular opportunity to run a skin care consultation business is but one of many possibilities available to us. I would encourage any member who would like to feel more at ease with herself in situations where she is with the other members of the diverse community of man, to follow the path I took. I would encourage the lass with the chestnut hair to be her own boss.

I help Linda advise cross-dressers that call her on how to get information about themselves, the particular phenomenon with which they think they are dealing, and the resources that are available to them. I am growing in the understanding of the my new found community of friends even as my Mary Kay friend and her associates are learning more about other members of the greater community they serve.

This newsletter (TGIC) has enriched me enormously over the past few months. The material is varied, informative, sometimes humorous or enigmatic, usually thought-provoking, and never dull. I hope from time to time to share my thoughts, questions, and opinions with you through this medium, in a way that is on a par with the excellent literary standard that has been set by past contributors. I have also enjoyed regular e-mail chat with club members by way of the computer and strongly encourage others to use this tool as an excellent way to disseminate information. Finally, a cigar tasting night would be lots of fun. More women are smoking cigars these days. What do you think?

Vanessa [redacted] <[redacted]>
P.O. Box 2165
Setauket, NY 11733

Vanessa and Linda came to our meeting on April 25 and demonstrated Mary Kay skin care products. Thank you, ladies!

Origins of the Clash Over Gays

by Patrick J. Buchanan, Republican Presidential Candidate

Buchanan for President 1-800-GO PAT GO

September 14, 1994 -

In the bitter battles over gay rights, conservatives are often asked, "Why can't you people just adopt an attitude of 'Live and let live?'"

Fair question -- and it was asked pointedly, recently in the New York Times by David Boaz of the Cato Institute.

Charging the right with "scapegoating ... gay men and women" for "votes and contributions," Mr. Boaz asked why conservatives do not focus instead on what really causes family break-up and childhood trauma: divorce, welfare, and neglect of responsibilities by parents.

Again, good question. But, Mr. Boaz has his social history backward. It was not the right that suddenly began issuing ultimatums on society. It was not the right that started this cultural war. It was the militant homosexuals who first stormed across society's old borders. And it is they who are assaulting traditional positions while painting themselves as victims of social and legal persecution.

Consider: Last week, the Washington Times reported that 20 U.S. agencies, including the Defense Department, were subjecting federal employees to indoctrination in the correct Clintonite thinking on homosexuality.

The Navy's "Diversity Day" program featured a video, "On Being Gay." In it, a homosexual describes his sexual practices and promotes acceptance of the same. Now, sodomy is forbidden by the Navy. And those caught engaging in it are mustered out of the service, pronto.

What was going on in that "workshop," then, was an attempt to rewire the value system of U.S. Navy officers.

Now, when right-wing Gen. Edwin Walker tried to indoctrinate U.S. troops in Germany with his anti-communism in the Kennedy era, all hell broke loose. Gen. Walker was cashiered. Defense Secretary William Perry should be called up to explain why U.S. Navy officers, at taxpayers' expense, are being brainwashed in the propaganda of gay rights. Are they next to be instructed in an appreciation of what it is that self-abusers, adulterers, masochists, and pedophiles do?

The point this episode makes is that some homosexuals do not just want to be left alone. They want a moral stamp of approval on their lifestyles. They want captive audiences, from schoolchildren to Navy officers indoctrinated in their ideology.

Gay rights militants are the aggressors in our cultural war. Neither Sen. Jesse Helms, North Carolina Republican, nor New York's Cardinal John O'Connor goes "gay bashing" at Dupont Circle or Greenwich Village. But homosexuals do annually parade naked in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral, perform lewd acts on the parade route, disrupt Sunday masses and vandalize churches. And almost always with the clucking indulgence of the Big Media.

If one wishes to determine who is attacking, and who is on the defensive, consider two controversial documents: the "Platform of the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual [bisexual] Rights and Liberation," and the platform of the GOP's 1992 Houston convention.

The first lists 62 demands. Among them: Repeal of all laws forbidding cross-dressing and sodomy, lowering the age of consent for sex of all kinds, a huge increase in AIDS funding (all out of the defense budget), a recognized legal right of gays to marry and adopt, mandated "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and

Transgender Studies Programs at all levels of education" homosexuals in the military, "safe and affordable" artificial inseminations, access to "the full range of reproductive options ... to all people regardless of age" (i.e., abortion on demand for 13-year-olds), open U.S. borders for all HIV positives, and forced opening of the Boy Scouts to homosexuals.

This is an agenda of social aggression.

The cause of this cultural war then, is the relentless drive by homosexuals and their allies to use schools and media to validate and propagate their moral beliefs, to convert all of America to those beliefs, and to codify them in federal law.

In this war, traditionalists have been almost always on the defensive, resisting, or trying to recapture -- by turning over gay rights ordinances in voter referenda -- lost terrain.

All the GOP platform said on homosexuality was: We oppose including gays and lesbians under civil rights laws; we oppose gays in the military; we oppose homosexual marriages; we stand with the Boy Scouts. Is that "gay-bashing"?

Yet the New York Times said of that document: "Hatred of gay Americans was written into the Republican Party platform."

A Christian position: While homosexuality is wrong, gays and Lesbians are children of God and citizens of this republic. As such they are entitled to all the constitutional rights of citizens, and to be treated with decency and, yes, compassion. But their conduct cannot command our respect, because it so violently contradicts our beliefs. If that be "homophobia," make the most of it.

Web transcribed by Allan Konrad - California

See Yourself With New Eyes

The power of photography to capture a moment, to see things through the eyes of another is magical. Rainbow Images, a lesbian owned and operated photography studio in Albany is working to capture images of queer people in a powerful and very special way. The owner, Cheryl, says that her specialty is portraits. "I believe you can capture the personality of a person in an image, show the inner self shining right through."

For only \$30, Rainbow Images offers personal studio sittings and 24 proof photos to choose from, with prints priced from \$10 each, and special values on packages. "We're not like those places at the mall," says Cheryl. "We don't have all the standard props and such -- you have to bring your own. Our goal is not to make you a conventional glamour portrait by adding layers, but to expose your own unique beauty and style."

If you are interested in seeing yourself through the eyes of another, call Rainbow Images at (518) 438-8922. Rainbow Images also does event photography, capturing ceremonies and parties, as well as distributing a line of postcards in Art & Desire, Bookhouse and Borders.



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Open Letter From Mel White to Pat Robertson

Permission granted to circulate, post widely and to publish

January 25, 1996

Dear Pat,

There is a growing spirit of intolerance in our land. Since the 1600s, when fundamentalist Christians chased Roger Williams to Rhode Island and burned 'witches' at the stake in Salem, similar cycles of intolerance have littered the nation with broken bodies and ruined dreams. Now, it's happening again. And that's why we're writing you.

We are convinced that your relentless campaign against homosexuality is a primary cause of the growing spirit of intolerance towards lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans. We have monitored every 700 Club broadcast since you came to visit me in the Virginia Beach City Jail in March, 1995. And though you condemn violence, we are also convinced that your false and inflammatory anti-homosexual rhetoric leads indirectly to the very violence you condemn.

On February 5, in Virginia Beach, we will present to the media and to the general public a sixty minute video tape of blatantly intolerant statements made by you and your guests on recent broadcasts of the 700 Club. Since you have not responded to our invitations to meet with you to discuss this matter privately, we are asking thoughtful Americans to look at this video tape and decide for themselves.

However, you, too, are invited to view and discuss the videos with us. You or your representative will have the opportunity to defend your case in the midst of a frank and open discussion of this question: Is Pat Robertson's anti-homosexual campaign a primary source of the intolerance being experienced by gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in America; and how should we respond to his anti-homosexual campaign?

Following our February 5 discussion, we will be sending the video tape of your anti-homosexual remarks, a transcript of the tape's contents, and an official petition of complaint to the F.C.C. asking commissioners to decide if you should be censured for your intolerance.

In all fifty states, the TV stations and cable systems that carry the 700 Club will receive the video, the transcript, and similar petitions of complaint from local clergy and lay leaders. Again, we will ask those managers to decide if you should be censured for your intolerance.

We are also sending video and transcript copies to the national media, to editorial writers and publishers, to the President, to leaders of the Senate and the House, to the Chairs of the National Governor's and the National Mayor's Conferences, to the US Council of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals and to other clergy and lay leaders across America. We are asking that each person or organization who receives the tape look at it carefully and decide for themselves: Should Pat Robertson be censured for his intolerance?

At this moment, you are threatening lawsuits against any local station that airs the P-FLAG ads that demonstrate your intolerant anti-homosexual campaign. Parents, Friends, and Families of Lesbians and Gays produced those two public service spots because they were alarmed by the growing hate crimes against their own children. They don't blame you for those hate crimes. But they do blame your anti-gay rhetoric for

helping to create the hostile climate in which those hate crimes are committed.

On that P-FLAG spot you say: "Homosexuality is an abomination. Many of those people involved with Adolf Hitler were Satanists, many of them were homosexuals. The two things seem to go together."

You said those words, Pat, on the 700 Club. You didn't show pictures of the Christian churches in Germany goose-stepping with the Third Reich. You didn't talk about the innocent European gays and lesbians who died in Hitler's concentration camps. You didn't tell of the brave homosexuals who fought and died to protect your freedom during that bloody world war against the Axis Powers. You were so caught up in half-truth and hyperbole that you missed the truth completely. And on February 5, we will show that you continue to miss the truth in your relentless, irresponsible, and intolerant campaign against us.

If you knew that a factory was pouring toxic pollution into your beloved Chesapeake Bay, you would send a TV crew to investigate and report immediately. We are convinced that a toxic stream of anti-homosexual intolerance is flowing out of your CBN/700 Club studios in Virginia Beach, helping to pollute the nation's moral environment. Again, we appeal to you. Hear our case. Reason with us. Help us stem that flow.

You are sincere, Pat, but you are sincerely wrong about homosexuality.

Your intolerant words and actions are harming God's gay and lesbian children. Again, I must quote Jesus's warning: "Whoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."

Sincerely, Mel White
(RevMel@AOL.COM)

Non Discrimination in Portland OR

On Wednesday, January 10, 1996, five members of the Portland, Oregon transsexual community appeared before the Portland City Council and made a formal request that a hearing be held seeking inclusion of the city's transsexual and transvestite community in the city's human rights ordinance. Margaret Diedre ██████ read a 3 minute statement before the city council formally making the request and stated several cases of discrimination which she herself has experienced in Portland.

In the morning of 1/10 an article appeared in the weekly newspaper, Willamette Week. Another article appeared in the 1/11 afternoon edition of the daily news paper, The Oregonian. The evening news on channels 2 (KPTU) and 12 (KPTV) ran features on us on 1/10. The KPTU news had a informal viewers poll which was 45% for inclusion and 55% against. The 1/17 Willamette Week carried a retort by a transsexual group lead by Andrea ██████ which is opposed to the city providing protection. Ms. Abernathy denies that transsexuals in Portland are the subject of discrimination.

Andrea ██████ is a transsexual woman who is leading the loosely organized transsexual group and who underwent a sex reassignment operation several years ago. Ms. Abernathy stated "There are people that look at us kind of funny, but to be discriminated against in any business, conveyance or employment? No."

At ██████'s request, Mayor Vera Katz directed the metropolitan Human Rights Commission to hold a hearing on the issue. ██████'s group is holding meetings to counter ██████'s offensive.

The act of being male, curtain call

Before I started to Transition, I thought that being seen and accepted as a woman had 90% of it tied into appearance. I know, I know, I should have known better, but it took some experience to understand it. Well, it's about 3 months into RLT, and my views have changed quite a bit (as I'm sure they will continue to).

Let me try to explain.

When I was getting real close to transition day, I began by changing my ties. They became colorful and started to reflect more of my style. I was sure at that time that people would guess what I was up to<giggle>. Nope, just "Hey nice ties! About time you got rid of those bland ones!". Then I started to wear more turtle necks, and "feminine" shirts, heck they were blouses, who am I kidding! Again, "Hey nice shirts! About time you got rid of those bland ones!". Then I started to wear "feminine" slacks, and in colors that I never would have worn before! And guess what? "Hey nice pants! About time you got rid of those bland ones!". Then I went and had my ears pierced. That too was perceived as being hip and cool! I lost much weight too.

So here I was, thinner, hipper and with a much better attitude about life in general (after all, I knew what I was up to, and I was ON THE PATH to it!). I even started to have women become incredibly attracted to me! (Take notes here...if you want the funky women, if you crave the divas out there, transcend gender lines!).

The *problem* (for some that's no problem), is that I'm not attracted to other women. Here was the problem for me. If heterosexual women found me attractive, that meant that they didn't see me as a woman. Why? First, I don't think people realize how far a male can dress, and still be considered male. It's so far into "conventional" female territory that it boggles the mind! Even wearing a dress won't do it. Wearing a dress will be seen as some kind of "statement".

When it finally became known by everyone EXACTLY what I was up to, it was like a ton of bricks for so many people. Things like "I never guessed" or "No way, not HIM!". I was amazed, that to me, I had transitioned many weeks before. For me, when I changed my ties is when I thought I transitioned.

Now I *know* clothes have a small, almost insignificant contribution to the equation. When I finally dropped the "male", and I mean all male presentation is when it happened.

My first "Can I help you ma'am" occurred in McDonalds. Yep, McD's is now firmly entrenched in my psyche. Ya know what I was wearing? Grey sweats, NO makeup, NO earrings, NO trappings of ANYTHING female. I had just worked out, and I was so relaxed when I walked up to the order counter. I was actually exhausted; I didn't care about anything but getting some food. Hmm...where have I heard that before? Relaxation, and not trying, and I mean NOT trying is the key.

Where does that relaxation come from?

How did Lauren shine through?

I think at the time I was so comfortable with what I was doing, that the act of "maleness" was gone. I guess for a MTF TS such as myself, it's the end of male-cross-living that breaks us on through.

When we drop, and I mean really drop the act, is when it happens. It's intangible, ethereal and quite profound.

If you know, then you know...now I do.

Lauren ()

Understanding the Bigendered Transvestite

It's started again. Attacks and denegration of TV's by those that wear other labels. It's almost as others do no wish to understand those unlike themselves.

I wear the TV label. I live a TV lifestyle that I believe makes me a much better human being for it allows me to reach out for the best in both genders. And because TV represents such a wide variety of gender identities and life paths, I normally narrow down that description of myself to "Bigendered TV". I'd like to see a constructive discussion on what it means to be a transvestite and bigendered transvestite. To give understanding for those that might wear the label and those that do not.

To start the discussion, allow me to give rough defintions of the three transvestite groupings I see, along with a fourth major grouping....

"Fetistic TV" - An individual who wears the clothing associated with the gender opposite his or her sex for sexual gratification reasons.

"Exploritory TV" - An individual who wears the clothing and sometimes assumes the social role associated with the gender opposite his or her sex and opposite his/her primary gender identity for self exploration reasons.

"Bigendered TV" - An individual who wears the clothing and assumes the social role associated with the gender opposite his or her sex to fulfill his/her gender identity. Such an individual is distinguished from a transgenderist or transsexual by having both a strong masculine AND feminine gender identity. In contrast, the transsexual/transgenderist only has a singular gender identity opposite of birth sex.

And for completeness....

Transgenderist/Transsexual - An individual who wears the clothing and assumes the social role associated with the gender opposite his or her birth sex to fulfill his/her gender identity. The difference between transgenderist and a transsexual is a dispute on the importance of genitalia to gender.

In the above definitions, I would define bigendered transvestites and transgenderist/transsexuals as both fitting the definition of transgendered (i.e. having a gender identity that does not match birth sex). But I'm hesitant to exclude the other transvestite groupings. Is this a good conclusion or bad? Opinions? Ideas, thoughts, questions in general? None of the above is absolute. It's just a possible view.

Marla

(MarlaB 01)

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Sean O'Neill Sentencing Results

James Green: I have just returned from Colorado Springs where The Transsexual Menace and The Menace Men staged a demonstration calling for no jail time for Sean O'Neill, who was up for 6 years in prison for sexual assault due to a plea bargain last December reducing his potential jail time from 32 years.

After hearing testimony from two of the "victims" and one of the girl's parents, and testimony from a Dr. Muller of Denver, myself, and Tony Barreto-Neto of TOPS, the judge handed down a sentence of 90 days in the county jail (not prison) which was deferred until suitable housing arrangements can be made so Sean does not have to be placed in with the women or the men (!), and 6 years probation with mandatory counseling with a gender specialist. This is the basic results, which I wanted to let you know about. There were at close to 20 transpeople and even more supporters present, and at least 6 trans men. This is a major success for us.

Dianna: Some observations:

-- Sean **could** have received up to eight years in prison for his plea-bargain second degree sexual assault (he could have received 48 years prison on the original 12 charges... some of which were related to having had sex with girls under the age of consent--15)

--Riki relented and turned her Transsexual Menace shirt inside out before coming into the court room, to not irritate the judge. Except during the reading of the sentence -- then it was out on display.

--The judge, during his reading of the sentence, *did* take a [good-natured] swipe at the TG crowd--"You cannot lobby for a sentence in my jurisdiction", he said.

--I believe the judge was expecting the worst from the TG crowd all day; but everyone was *very* respectful of the proceedings. The demonstration was very well mannered.

--James Green absolutely blew away the family and friends of the "victim"/girls in the courtroom when he revealed his F2M past... Their jaws all hit the floor in unison.... And then Tonye Benetto-Neto testified.... Tonye jammed the District Attorney into stupidity with the cool way he deflected the cross-examination questions and hypotheticals. . .

--After all was over, the District Attorney shook hands with James Green, and apologized to him for the nature of the questions he had asked.

--The "victim" girls and their parents played into Dumb and Dumber all through this thing: one girl Sean is alleged to have sexually assaulted admitted to having had sex with Sean 51 (fifty-one) times, and testified she still thought Sean was a boy all along..... She thought Sean's breasts were just fat rolls..

--One father and mother, while crying that their daughter was now "so traumatized" by the assaults, admitted on the stand that they had never gotten married, and didn't even live together

--The girl Sean had the *most* sex with is *still* chasing him; she called him at home on Thursday night.... She mouthed a death threat, in the courtroom, to Sean's current girlfriend!

--The judge almost spent more time chastizing one of the "victim" girls for going on the Jerry Springer Show with all of this, then he spent reading Sean's sentence.

--For a case that should never have gotten so out-of-hand in the first place, this one had a very reasonable outcome, especially in the "home town" of the Religious Right, Colorado Springs CO;

John Smith's Sex Change Operation

COLUMN by Deborah Weiss, THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

I was prosecuting a paternity case on behalf of the city welfare department to determine who was the father of an illegitimate child. The court officer called in "John Smith." A beautiful, big-busted woman approached the stand. She had long blond hair, smooth skin, and was wearing a low-cut blouse.

"Are you John Smith?" the court officer asked.

"Yes."

Everyone in the courthouse just looked at each other; it was business as usual in Manhattan's Family Court.

I cleared my throat and began my case: "Are you the father of this child?"

"Yes," John Smith stated in a manly voice. "I am."

The respondent then explained that "she" was in the process of a transsexual operation. "She'd" had all her injections, the required amount of psychotherapy, and evidently was just waiting the final surgery to be performed. The hearing examiner ruled that John Smith was the child's father based on his/her own admission, and tried to continue the hearing without using any pronouns.

We proceeded to the matter of child support.

"Mr. Smith?" I asked. "Can you contribute \$25 per month to assist the welfare department in supporting your child?"

"I can't."

"But Mr. Smith," I said, "25\$ per month is less than a dollar per day - just a token gesture, really. Besides, how can you say you don't have any money for child support when you are paying for a transsexual operation?"

"Oh, no," Mr. Smith answered with surprise. "I'm receiving this operation for free."

"For free? You found a doctor to work for free?"

"No, no," Mr. Smith explained. "Medicaid is paying for it."

Medicaid?! I looked around the courtroom. No one blinked.

After the case came to a close, I rushed to my office to inquire about what I'd just learned. "Could it possibly be true that Medicaid pays for transsexual operations?" I asked one of my lawyer colleagues.

"Oh, that," she said, shrugging. "Medicaid pays for a transsexual operation whenever it is deemed to be 'medically necessary.' I had a case like that a few years ago." She referred me to the statute. "Just make sure you note in the file that the father is a woman. Otherwise he might appeal the case down the road. When the judge sees a woman walk in, who you say is named John and is the father of the child, the judge will assume you confused some Social Security numbers and reverse the ruling."

Don't be so judgmental, a supervisor later scolded me when I told him about the case. The poor thing is really a woman trapped inside a man's body, he said, and very depressed about it. He looked at me sternly. Walking back to my office, I recalled a Saturday Night Live sketch in which a physician tells a Chinese patient with an Italian accent that he's really an Italian trapped inside a Chinese body and needs a "transracial" operation. I wondered if Medicaid would cover that too.

(Deborah Weiss is a lawyer formerly with the New York City Department of Social Services. The name of the respondent and some of the details have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the case. This piece is adapted from one in the current issue of The Women's Quarterly.)

TS Bill Fails in the UK:

The end of the beginning

(Christine Burns of Press for Change reports on the failed passage of Alex Carlile's recent Private Members Bill in Parliament, and explains why an apparent disappointment is a cause to celebrate.)

It was, from our elevated point of view, a bizarre match. Ten transsexuals, their supporters and a bemused public looked down from the public gallery on the eleven MP's below, enacting a form of democratic ritual which is uniquely British, and never what it seems. By now, everybody knows that we lost the battle of the day .. yet in its' peculiar way, Britain's transsexuals secured a vital win on that cold Friday afternoon. Parliament debated transsexual rights for the first time in history and the wheels of change began to move.

Transsexuality has been redefined in millions of minds and the entire community has begun to demand and receive public respect. The end may still be frustratingly far away but, from this point on, the script we have lived with for more than a quarter of a century is being rewritten. It may be too early to dub this the beginning of the end, but the changes wrought in a few short weeks mean, at least, that we have passed the end of the beginning.

The second reading of Alex Carlile's Gender Identity (Registration and Civil Status) bill took place in the House of Commons on Friday February, 2nd after a fortnight of unprecedented media coverage of the human rights issues, and one of the most effective constituency lobby campaigns that MPs can remember in modern times. It was a magnificent team effort by everybody involved and, though the bill didn't reach a vote in the time available, the event has projected the transsexual rights campaign from obscurity into a significant contemporary political issue almost overnight. The support and understanding generated by this bill means we can now talk of when, instead of simply if .. to both MPs and journalists who have now started to comprehend the nature of transsexuality, and the legal absurdities we all face.

It was especially poignant that the bill should be read on February 2nd, for on that date 26 years previously Lord Justice Ormerod had delivered his judgement from a spot less than a mile away, defining April Ashley as legally male, and casting a shadow over the rest of our lives for more than a quarter of a century since.

For us, in Press for Change, it was a major milestone. We may not have won just yet, but that is in no way unusual for a Private Member's Bill. What we have done though, is to prove how effective you can all be when asked to do something. All the MPs say the same : You were marvellous. Your letters have been read and admired. Your visits have changed minds. Your pushing has turned something once confidently deemed impossible into something now achievable. Of course we'll need more of your co-ordinated help before we achieve our eventual goal but before explaining what you can do next, however, it's maybe a good time to explain properly what has happened to date.

The Press for Change campaign is now in its' sixth year and, if you think that's a long time to get this far then remember that just five years ago there was only ever one way in which the media routinely treated any transsexual they came across. We've had to be both patient and subtle, co-ordinating legal and medical expertise and building friendships and contacts in the media, parliament and religious bodies (as well as in legal and medical circles). Gradually, and with all your help too, we've sown the seeds of our message.

The contribution you've all made cannot be understated either. Eighteen months ago Dr Lynne Jones (the Labour MP for Birmingham Selly Oak) formed the all party Parliamentary Forum on Transsexualism because she'd received a personal visit from a transsexual constituent. At the Conservative Party Conference last October, we likewise gained a very significant government supporter (Roger Sims, the Conservative MP for Bromley Chislehurst) because a transsexual had been to see and explain their problems to him. The Alex Carlile bill also obtained the extent of parliamentary time that it got, because so many of you have been out to see your MPs or got people to write to them.

Steadily these activities have been coming together. At the beginning of 1995, the Parliamentary Forum published the first draft of a document entitled "Transsexualism - The Medical Viewpoint", a work that has been essential in underlining the medical legitimacy of our case. The forum also ensured that the legal group (including our own Dr Stephen Whittle) worked in a co-ordinated fashion on cases such as the now famous P vs S and

Cornwall County Council, and to secure a judicial review of the birth certificate issue. On a parliamentary front, we took the campaign message to both the Labour and Conservative party conferences in October .. and made important friends in the media and among MPs who were personally lobbied inside those events.

Gradually, we've been altering our own profile too. With media contacts who've begun to really comprehend our message and support us, we've stopped being the nameless, faceless people in the shadows and we've shown the world that transsexual people have the pride of conviction. We've provided models of well-integrated and normal citizens, campaigning with justification for rights that have been taken away as the result of a medical treatment for a recognised condition. And we've watched and helped some of you do that too. In marketing-speak, we have relaunched transsexuality as a concept. We've begun to show the world that we aren't ashamed to be identified and named, and by doing that we've given the world a cause to think differently too. If you cower and act furtively it sends a negative message. If you stand tall and proud, then people see something different altogether. Proud people get listened to. Respectable citizens have rights. People whose rights are abused get coverage and sympathy.

The result is that media coverage in the last few weeks has been outstanding (with the occasional exception). Interest has obviously been propelled by the Private Members Bill, but the groundwork means journalists who've got to know and respect our cause have written fair and balanced pieces, to cover the event. Since newspapermen are notorious for getting their ideas from each other, the effect has been cumulative too .. with fact packs being faxed to new callers by Press for Change almost every day now. Channel Four gave one of our activists one of the best prime time platforms available, with a five minute film in The Slot, just before Brookside. In the same week they ran the much acclaimed film Second Serve, about the life of American Ophthalmic Surgeon and Tennis star, Renee Richards (the first ever screening of this film in the UK) and that has been followed by the two part documentary made by Oliver Morse in his series The Decision. Regional BBC and Independent TV presenters have been catching up too, with cameras visiting some activists almost weekly. National and local radio has done its' share of informed programming too .. all repeating the messages we've been patiently teaching behind the scenes for so long. In short we have gone from being chased by the media to being the eager pursuers.

Subject to a few important precautions that apply to anyone promoting a cause, the media can now in fact be an important ally for us all to use. The spirit was summed up by one regional television reporter who said, "I'm sorry. We never realised that it [transsexuality] was a medical condition. We never knew there were these problems. We've been discussing it in the office and we all support what you're doing."

All in all the emergence of the Liberal Democrat MP Alex Carlile's name in the ballot for Private Members Bills before Christmas could not have been more timely therefore. Alex Carlile has been a supporter of the transsexual cause for over ten years, initially as a result of the failed legal challenge by Mark Rees in 1986. A QC himself, he is one of the best qualified MPs to champion such a complex legal issue. Alex had been waiting for years for the scarce opportunity to bring forward a bill and the chance finally came in the ballot just before Christmas, almost on the same day that the European Court Advocate General published his important recommendation about transsexual employment rights. Whichever angel looks over our campaign, however, you could be forgiven for thinking they have a cruel sense of humour though, for as the ninth to emerge in the draw for this session, the chances of the bill actually getting read were statistically poor it was, literally, the luck of the draw.

The position in the ballot also meant that the bill's second reading was to be the third bill of the day on February 2nd. The time given to Private Members Bills is very strictly controlled. On Fridays they are debated in a session that starts late in the morning and ends on the dot of 2.30pm, when the house formally adjourns. Bills usually take up to ninety minutes to be chewed over by a handful of interested members, either fervently for or against an issue, or simply in love with the sound of their own voices. Consequently, whether by accident (or sometimes by design) a third bill may not even get debated if one or both of the previous two take up too much time. Once its' time has run out, the chances of a bill getting more precious time in the same session of parliament, are almost non-existent.

The first bill before ours on the order paper sought to outlaw so-called sex-tourism, a practice which Britain has been slow to clamp down on, compared to most other countries. For all its' importance, however, you might be surprised to learn that there were a mere half dozen MPs in the chamber to debate it. Nonetheless, those six were determined to explore

the subject fully and so the bill only passed successfully just before 1pm .. leaving one entire bill to go before ours and the 2.30pm deadline.

The second bill concerned amendments to trading laws, intended to clamp down on the practice of pyramid selling, and here it was apparent that one MP and the junior minister opposing the motion were in no hurry to get to the end of their speeches. This is a well known practice in parliament, used to ensure that the bill that follows runs out of time, and they certainly succeeded, with the debate on dubious trading practices drawn out by dubious parliamentary practices till 1.55pm.

The only remedy for an attempt to talk out a bill, incidentally, is for an aggrieved MP to call for the proceedings to move straight to a vote on the motion. This, however, requires a majority of 100 MPs to be present in the chamber and, with just eleven seated by this time, that was not an option. This is why it was so important to mobilise as much parliamentary support as possible. In parliament, however, things are never quite what they appear. Had they wanted to do so, then the government could have ensured the bill had no time at all and this lapse, together with the "code" contained in things which the government's opposing spokesman did say, mean the event was far more of a parliamentary success than it might appear on paper.

With just thirty-five minutes left, Alex Carlile rose to his feet and explained the purpose of his bill, referring to the medical consensus about the nature and treatment of transsexuality, the world-wide legal consensus, the recent and soon-to-be-heard cases, and sketching the lives of typical transsexual people and the problems they endure at the hands of the present law. He stressed the problems inherent in simply reacting to the problems issue-by-issue, as the government looks set to lose one court case after another, and he was supported by Labour's Dr Lynne Jones, and then from the Conservative benches, by Roger Sims (who is a junior health minister). Next there was Kevin Barron, the Labour front bench spokesman whose contribution again signalled that the parliamentary Labour party supported the motion. Edwina Currie, who had altered her engagements to be present, also spoke from the Conservative back benches and Labour's Llin Golding appeared ready to speak, but forsook the opportunity as the hands of the clock passed 2.15.

The tension for those of us in the gallery was intense as the government's spokesman, John Horam (Orpington) rose to reply to the motion. The government had signalled its' opposition to the bill all along, citing particular clauses and the bill's overall approach to solving the birth certificate issue. Yet his reply was more positive than might have been expected, containing specific assurances that the government can now be pressed on by the growing band of parliamentary supporters. Furthermore, all of this dialogue is now a matter of public record, in Hansard, where it will be read and digested by many of the 640 MPs who weren't present.

At 2.30pm on the dot, however, the deputy speaker rose and called the house briskly to order .. bringing down the shutters on the debate, and snatching away the possibility of a vote. It was so near, and yet so far.

In the press conference afterwards, all three lead MPs stressed the significance of getting so far, and paid tribute again to the letter writing and personal lobbying carried out by transsexuals under the co-ordination of Press for Change. They stressed how understanding and perception of transsexuals had altered over the last few years, and reiterated the problems which transsexuals face. And nobody intends to stand still. The politicians now have a basis on which to campaign among their colleagues, and we in Press for Change have many more contacts to pursue, and many more Television and press opportunities to take up. The medical viewpoint document, underwritten by six clinicians and researchers of world-wide repute, has just been updated to reflect the anatomical research published in the last few months and has to be circulated now as far and as wide as possible, where it matters.

To professionally print and distribute this document will cost several hundred pounds, and one way in which you can help Press for Change to do this is by making a donation. We desperately need money. If you can't afford to make a contribution yourself, then give a talk or get your friends to donate. Send your cheques (payable to Press for Change) to Press for Change, BM Network, London WC1N 3XX.

You can also help to capitalise on the increased profile of our plight by getting petition signatures. We want 10,000 signatures and, as yet, still only have about 3,000. If every member of GEMS filled just one standard petition form with twenty signatures, however, we would achieve our target. And now you have no reason not to ask. If you need extra petition sheets, then write to us at the above address.

Finally, if you feel ready for it (and that depends on your state of transition and self-confidence, of course) then it has never been a better time to talk to your local paper. Local papers are read by over 80% of the people in the communities they serve. That makes them very much more powerful than the national dailies in getting a message across, especially as they have more space for a feature.

The key thing to remember is that you need to negotiate what you're offering in return. Most journalists would far rather co-operate over a story than go out of their way to exploit you, and their agenda reflects what they sense to be public opinion. With an almost universally sympathetic national press, therefore, you have justification in saying that you want to talk about the effects of the law on your life, rather than about your sex life or anatomy. Remember, you are a respectable citizen who has been diagnosed with a recognised medical condition. Behave at all times as though you expect sympathy and respect, and most of the time you'll find that you get it.

The journalist will want some information about you, in order to humanise the story, but don't be afraid to set limits which would be reasonable in any other circumstance. Set the scene too. It's usually much easier to work with a journalist if you send them briefing notes beforehand, and conveys the impression that you mean business. All the material you require is available in the Press for Change campaign pack. Explain what transsexuality is, and what it isn't. Then catalogue the legal problems which transsexuals face, and how they affect you.

Above all, remember that the journalist probably knows nothing about the subject .. and adult ignorance about even very basic matters of sexual anatomy and normality are often surprisingly sketchy. So don't take any knowledge for granted. Most people have never thought about the separateness of sex, sexuality and gender. You'll probably need to explain, for instance, how being Gay doesn't make somebody want to be a member of the opposite sex .. and that wanting to be a member of the opposite sex doesn't determine your sexual preference. You'll almost certainly have to differentiate transvestism and transsexuality. Have respect for those other situations though. Your interviewer may after all be Gay or transvestite.

Finally, set out to make a friend and an ally. Journalists may like to deny the fact, but they do wield tremendous power in 20th Century society. Public opinion only advances when people succeed in harnessing that power, and to do that the journalist must be on your side.

Press for Change and the Gender Trust can also help your tame journalist get more background to substantiate their article. We can put them in touch with medical and legal experts and politicians, and we can fax or post more detailed background information too. We are also available ourselves to explain the lobbying campaign, and provide extra anecdotal details about cases.

Please keep us informed though. If you feel ready and willing to approach your local newspaper then let us know beforehand .. and, of course, we'd like to see the results too ! Unlike writing a letter, this isn't something everybody may be ready or willing to do, but if you feel that you can contribute, then we want to make sure you're well supported and briefed.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRI-ESS MEETINGS IN SCHENECTADY

The Lambda Chi Lambda Chapter of Tri-Ess holds monthly Saturday meetings at a motel in Schenectady. The planned schedule is: May 18, June 15.

BECOME AN IFGE MEMBER

The International Foundation for Gender Education is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Basic membership is \$25 per year. Subscriptions to *Transgender Tapestry* are \$40. Brochures and forms are available in the TGIC Club Room. Call or write to:

IFGE (617) 899-2212
PO Box 229
Waltham, MA 02154-0229

ICTLEP NOW HAS PERMANENT OFFICE

The International Conference on Transgender Law & Employment Policy established a small permanent office, staffed by one part-time legal assistant, in January. Their address is:

ICTLEP, Inc.
PO Drawer 35477
Houston, TX 77235-5477
Phone: 713-777-TGLC (8452)
Fax: 713-777-0909

ANONYMOUS HIV ANTIBODY TESTING

Your regional HIV Counseling and Testing Program provides free HIV counseling and antibody testing, support and referral. No names will be asked. (NYS Health Department) **Albany Area:** (518) 486-1595 or 1-800-962-5065.

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Coordinator [redacted]

CALENDAR

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

MAY 1996 (NS = No Smoking Meeting)

May 9 NS Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
May 11 **Dinner Party**, 8:00 pm
Sign up by May 9
May 16 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
May 23 NS Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
May 30 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

JUNE 1996 (NS = No Smoking Meeting)

Jun 6 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jun 8 **Dinner Party**, 8:00 pm
Sign up by June 6
Jun 13 NS Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jun 20 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jun 27 NS Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

MAJOR COMING EVENTS

May 15-19 *Esprit '96*, Port Angeles, WA
May 16-19 *Paradise in the Poconos*,
Canadensis, PA
June 5-9 *Be-All*, Detroit, MI
June 13-16 *Tiffany Club Spring Fling*,
Provincetown, MA
July 3-7 *TRANSGEN'96*, Houston, TX
July 24-28 *S.P.I.C.E.*, Wilmington, DE
Sept 1-8 *Dignity Cruise VII*, NYC to
Bermuda
Sept 19-21 *Paradise in the Poconos*,
Canadensis, PA
Sept 26-29 *Southern Comfort*, Atlanta, GA
Oct 20-27 *Fantasia Fair*, Provincetown



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