

IT'S TIME AMERICA LUNCHEON

Friday, June 16, 1995

Speakers:

- Lisa Janet Middleton, Health and Insurance Law Moderator, ICTLEP
- Jane Fee, Director of It's Time America and Winner of ICTLEP Transgender Pioneer Award
- Karen Kerin, Executive Director, It's Time America

By Lisa Middleton:

Hello and welcome to the "It's Time America" luncheon. This is a wonderful event and a wonderful opportunity for all of us to be here and to be together. There are a couple of people who are incredibly special and unique who have come to this event today, and I want to begin by acknowledging them and their presence. We have with us today two mothers of transgendered people. Evelyn, who has a new daughter, age 16; and Diane, with a new son, age 30. Congratulations and thank you.

Every now and then you wonder, Are we making progress? Then you see "Mom" show up, and you know we're not making progress, we're standing the world on its head!

All right. My name is Lisa Middleton. I'm going to be your hostess today and I'm looking forward to it. We've got a great event coming. There are a couple of announcements to start with.

The first one is from L.A. Lisa; her name is only going to confuse me, since I grew up in Los Angeles before moving to San Francisco. But, Lisa, could you come up and talk about the tapes?

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF CROSSDRESSERS AND TRANSGENDERED -- NORTHRIDGE CONFERENCE

By Lisa Ann Jayne:

I'm from Los Angeles. Can I say "y'all"? Y'all having a good time?

Coming out here was a last minute thing for me. I literally didn't know I was coming until Friday of last week at 4:00 o'clock. I called feverishly looking for a duplicator. I wanted to come to this, and I just couldn't find a duplicator. To find one in Los Angeles, I did the International Congress on cross dressing, sex research and gender issues. I didn't quite say that right. I don't have my notes in front of me.

Anyway, I recorded that and have gotten just lots of accolades. When I got to the airport with the equipment, they charged me an extra \$180, one way, to get here. I brought some gender conference

tapes along with me. I've listened to them, and I'd like Dallas Denny to just say a brief word about that.

By Dallas Denny:

I don't have a tape player in my car, but I've been listening to them on the Walkman, mostly as I drive to work and back. It's that kind of conference that only happens once every couple of decades. It's really a ground-breaking conference. There were all kinds of high-powered presenters giving their best work here, and it's very well worth the money. There are 40 tapes in the series. You'll be listening all year long if you buy them.

By Lisa Ann Jayne:

Anyhow, we upped the prices to \$304 for the complete set. I'll let a set go for \$200. I have two complete sets duplicated. If you'll check into the registration office, you'll see the listing of tapes. Over 90 professionals came from all over the globe to make this event happen. A lot of you were there; a lot of you have bought the tapes. James Green was there, Stephen Whittle was there, Dallas Denny was there and presented. Jane Ellen Fairfax was there and presented. Just a lot folks that you know were there and presented.

Lisa Middleton, I believe you were there and presented. She did the thing on insurance. I've been asked to keep this short so I will. Also, we will be having tapes available for this conference. That's

why I came here to record this. The high speed duplicator came up about half an hour ago, so we'll have them ready and you'll be hearing more about that, so check the tape list out on the International Congress of Crossdressing, Transgender – Northridge Conference. Very good, check it out.

By Lisa Middleton:



Lisa Ann Jayne
Conference Audio Services Provider

We've been calculating the figures for Thursday's luncheon, and they are 22 percent above the luncheon figures for Thursday's luncheon last year. And as of 11:30 this morning we were 20 percent above our Friday totals for last year. So, congratulations to all of us.

Well, I'm a lady who's had her dreams come true this week on the first Thursday in May. The president of our organization, a company where I've spent over 20 years of my life, where I've devoted my adult life received numerous accolades and the kind of attention that I always dreamed of, even though that kind of attention didn't resolve my issues.....

In any case, on that first Thursday in May, our president had confirmed what had become the rather pronounced rumor around our organization. One of the most prominent managers they had was transsexual.

So that was Thursday, and he was off traveling on business when it was confirmed to him in a rather pronounced way. It was announced, as a matter of fact. On Monday morning he called his personnel manager into his office for a private chat. All of us have learned over the years to wonder what will happen when the CEO sits down to talk to the personnel manager privately and quietly about the person they've just discovered is transsexual. (This is one of our most important managers. This is somebody we've nurtured. This is someone we care about.) What our president said is: "This is a condition that does not affect this individual's work performance."

What the president did then was to tell the personnel manager she had a new job. And her new job was to manage this transition on behalf of the individual employee, but most importantly, on behalf of the entire organization. She had available to her every single resource that was necessary in a \$6 billion company to ensure that this was a successful transition, and that's exactly what has happened.

At 9:30 on Tuesday morning of this week, I closed my last meeting, took the tie off for the very, very last time, went to the hairdresser right away and sat down at 6:15 that evening with the executive-vice president and two other vice presidents so they could check out their new manager. Apparently she "passed", to say the least. So I want to thank everyone in this room, because the confidence, the self assuredness, the inspiration to accomplish what I've been able to accomplish in the last year, to make that dream come true, came from the people in this room.

So often we hear of the stories where it didn't work; what didn't turn out to be our hopes and dreams is what came true. But when I came here last year, looking for help, looking for assistance, what I found at table after table, and then heard in story after story was individuals who had fought and won, who had found the solutions; people who could sit down, and did, and told me, "This is how you do it." We've all heard the little child sitting there banging away at the piano, and that usually doesn't inspire us very much. But then we hear Horowitz playing Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata", we want to play piano, and we want to do it in the worst way.

When I sat down and listened to the stories told at this conference last year, I was ashamed that I

had waited so long to accomplish what I was capable of. I had let fear get in my way. Each and every one of us has an opportunity to live our life to the fullest, and it's the people in this room who are going to make it all possible. None of us do it alone. Thank you. Thank you so very much.

Let me tell you the second thing that happened that made a dream come true for this girl. This week, on Monday, when she got to her mailbox and she opened it up, there was a card that cost \$1.50 that will be with her for the rest of her life, because that card read: "To our daughter on her birthday with love, your mom."

We can do it. As a matter of fact, earlier this year, IFGE held their convention in Atlanta. I got an opportunity, along with Alison Lang and Marissa Foster, on the Sunday as that convention ended, to make a pilgrimage of only a few, short city blocks from the convention hotel, down a little street to a modest house and then across that street to the tomb of Martin Luther King. I got to stand at his feet for a few moments and look out and imagine that man and the kinds of things that he accomplished. Then we walked inside and we toured around.

We toured around inside the hall where they keep Dr. King's legacy burning for all of us, and we



(L-R) Sarah DePalma and Jessica Xavier, Directors of It's Time America

looked at the various documents and testimonies and stories of his life. I was doing pretty good until I got over to the travel suitcase, a little, small leather suitcase that Dr. King kept with him at all times, so he could travel on his journeys. It

was such a human thing; the shirt, the cuff links, the wallet, the Bible, that he carried with him wherever he went. Then you saw, not the man who stood on podiums and moved millions, but the man, the human being. I thought for a moment how lucky I was to be transgendered in the 1990s, when our history is being made, when we have an opportunity to be the David Abernathies, the

Jesse Jacksons, the Dr. Kings, the people who made history in our movement.

Some day, as Martine will tell us, maybe in about 20 years the historians of our movement will not take out a pen, but will take out their cybervisor, and they will imagine words onto a screen. They will record the history of this movement, and they will record the history of our people and the folks who turned it around, who passed the first laws, who were elected judge for the first time. Doesn't Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye have a ring to it?

The first openly transsexual person to be elected to a legislature. The first openly transsexual person who stood in their company and integrated that company, because we all know we won't be the first transsexual person – we won't be the first transgendered person who has accomplished any goal whatsoever. We've all been gone before. The only thing we have a chance to do is be the first to do it out in the open in the broad daylight, like a real human being.

I thought it was fun when I found out the music that was being selected for my opening; Abba, me, a child of the '60s who believes that 1970s music was a conspiracy against Joan Baez and Janis Ian. But then I thought for a moment and I go, no, no, because Abba is in Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, and all of us should see that movie. It was in Priscilla that I found, again, one of my favorite characters, a lady to stand right there next to Anna Madrigal. Because Bernadette sat there one day in the movie and she talked to this young gay man as he was in tears because his life was in jeopardy for the sin of trying to enjoy himself one night. She offered aid and comfort to this young man, and she looked at him and said, "If you're going to be a man one day and a woman the next, you've got to be tough." And that's the people in this room: compassionate, comforting, caring and tough.

So I propose that for our movement we put out a "help wanted" sign, and on that "help wanted" sign we say, "Transgendered Movement Leaders, no sissies need apply."

We have six folks whom no one has ever called a sissy. They're our panel. We have a wonderful presentation for you today. We're going to get a whip and a cane if we need to, but I'd like to welcome the panelists to come up now, and we are going to talk about political action in the transgendered community.

I asked each one of these folks how they wanted to be introduced – except Jane. Jane just got stuck with whatever I gave her which is Jane Fee. Jane's actually, whether you know it or not, the Mother of "It's Time Anything", as she was one of the leading advocates in Minnesota, a person who's responsible for helping get passed the antidiscrimination statute for the State of Minnesota; still the only state to recognize transgendered individuals. Jane Fee.

Next to Jane, the President of "It's Time America", leading advocate in the State of Vermont and, we think, Jim Jeffords' right hand person, Karen Kerin.

Gordene MacKenzie; friend, activist, supporter of our community as acting director of women's studies at the University of New Mexico and author of Transgender Nation.

Riki Ann Wilchins. (This is how she wants to be called): "Her Highness".

Sarah DePalma is the founder, director inspiration of "It's Time Texas". And Jessica Xavier, founder of "Transgender Nation" in our nation's capital, Washington, D. C. and co-founder of "It's Time Maryland."

Sheets of paper are being passed out to you. We'd like you to write down questions and pass them up. We will hit your questions in just a little bit. We're going to try to spend no more than five minutes on any particular question. I've got questions that I'm going to ask each one of the



(L-R) Karen Kerin, Gordene McKenzie, Riki Wilchins

p a n e l
members,
and then
we're going
to move on.
After we
ask a
person
from the
panel a
question,
give an
opportunity
for others to
comment
on that
question.

I ' m
going to
give the
f i r s t
question to

Jane, and I'm going to ask Jane to talk about her experiences in building an effective coalition with the gay and lesbian community.

BRIDGE BUILDING WITH THE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITIES

By Jane Fee:

One of the first things that I learned is, when you're interviewed or asked questions, ignore the question and make the statement that you want to make. But in this case, I will answer the question

because I think it is important. Unfortunately, many of you may have heard me speak of this before, but I personally feel that there isn't any right answer. There is no single way of accomplishing a goal. There are many, many ways of achieving it, and it requires your sensitivity to who it is you're dealing with in order to determine the best route.

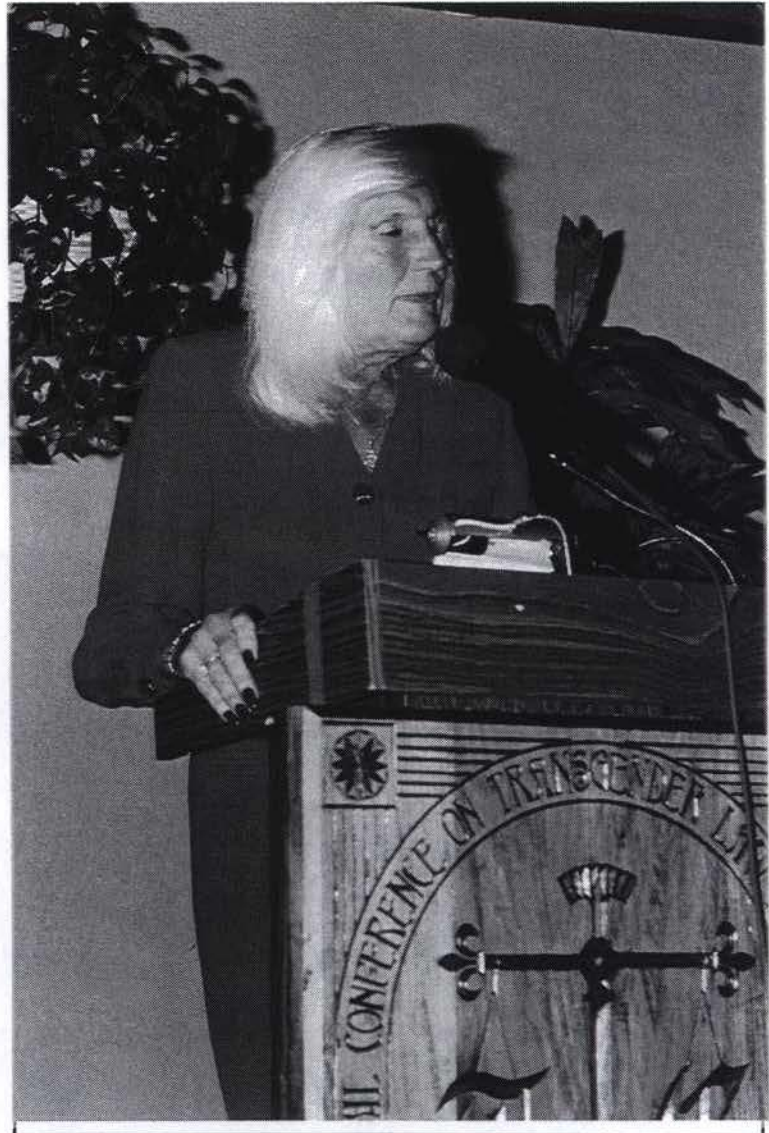
One of the things which is absolutely essential is that if you want someone else to consider what you have to say, you have to take THEM into consideration: them, their feelings, their sensitivities. Then you have the basis for beginning to achieve something.

I'm probably stealing from what I was going to say a little bit – but, the absolute turning point in Minnesota, when we were working on passing a law which took us 20 years to pass, THE most important single moment that I can recall is when we had a steering committee meeting. Of course, this was a coalition of gays and lesbians, bisexual and transgendered. The transgendered group, as always, was the very smallest.

We had a number of legislators there, talking to us about the fact that they thought that the bill had a good chance at passing on this round, but they might have to make a compromise. Of course, the token that could be tossed away easiest of all, was the transgendered aspect.

Well, a lot discussion took place at that time. Most of the people seemed to be in favor of doing that, because, after all, the majority were gay and lesbian, and they were very much interested in getting their own rights. Finally, when the discussion was about to end, I stood up and reminded them who I was, who I represented and I said to them: "You know what? If you try and pass this law without including us, you can bet that I'm going to do absolutely everything in my power to see to it that the law is passed, because I'm for equal rights for every one."

It turned the whole meeting around! At that point they said, "If you can't have it, we can't have it



**Jane Fee, Director of It's Time America
and Winner of ICTLEP Transgender Pioneer Award**

either." No, I'm not suggesting that there aren't times when we have to fight organizations or individuals and their feelings about something, but there are many times when trying to see their viewpoint and showing them that we are not interested in discriminating against others, that we can achieve our goals as well, is what it's all about. Fortunately, we have the most significant relationship between gays, lesbians and transgendered people in the State of Minnesota of anywhere I know. Everyone who is coming to the state and participating in any of our events has been absolutely amazed at the way we work together.

By Lisa Middleton:

Another state where we're having success is one we wouldn't predict, and that's Texas. I wonder if Sarah can talk about the kinds of experiences that she's had in Austin and what it's taken to achieve what you've been able to achieve there.

By Sarah DePalma:

Chutzpa, I think is the word. In Texas we've encountered a little different situation. First of all, there are a lot of people who said "Well, gee, Texas conservative." We discovered a tool here in Texas that works very well called the "Internet."

People have to remember that Texas is roughly the same size as the country of France. I can't just drive out to Lubbock and say "Oh, gee, I hear you're having a problem here." So we have learned to use the Internet. I'm very proud that we have seven city organizations now, seven cities in which "It's Time whatever" is in existence. And of those seven, four of them are run by crossdressers. We have taken the approach in Texas that there's no circumstance in which we will ever write off crossdressers, period.

The result of that is that, in Texas, crossdressers are slowly coming to understand they have a stake in the process. Here in Houston, within recent weeks, we've had two hate crime incidents, both of them against crossdressers. That's why in Texas, in the next legislative, we are going to go to the state legislature with our own hate crimes bill, which will be transgender inclusive.

We have already testified in front of the legislature once with a name/gender change bill. Interestingly, Phyllis was one of the leading proponents of this, and it could have cut her income by a substantial portion. Yet, she was one of the people who spoke in favor of it. We were very surprised. When we spoke to this committee, not only were we well received, we were well respected.

At one point during my talk I said something to the general effect of, "well, I realize you're probably not going to take us very seriously." And one of the legislators stopped me and said, "If we didn't take you seriously, you wouldn't be here." As it turns out, our bill passed out of committee. It passed 7 to 2.

Both of the people who were against it happened to have been the chair and vice chair of the committee, both very conservative Republicans. But because we did not go and make enemies of them, they agreed to pass it out of the committee. They said they would not testify against it if it went to the floor. So, that's one of the things that we have learned in Texas; just because people do not vote with you does not mean they are your enemy.

Another thing that we are learning here is: don't judge on party labels. I told somebody last time we have two kinds of legislators in Texas, bubbas and red necks. So the party labels don't mean very much. The fact that it says "Republican" or "Democrat" is not really how you can judge people. You have to judge them on what they're willing to do, or not do. We are learning that in Texas as well. But the one thing that I'm most proud of, more than anything, is the way that the transgendered community in Texas is coming to view itself.

There was a time, in this state, not very long ago, when nonsurgicals didn't talk to post-ops, and post-ops didn't talk to crossdressers and this group didn't talk to that group. What we are learning is that, in this state, we are absolutely going to have to be able to work together, and we are. I'd like to think that Texas can become a model for the rest of the country if we can learn to do it, to overcome those old biases. And I guarantee you, wherever you live, you can do it, too.

By Lisa Middleton:

Let's ask a question of Jessica concerning working together and concerning support. One of the things that she spoke about yesterday was that, in the gay community there are many, many people who are closeted, who do not get active, but they send money and they help the cause through the checkbook. So far, we have been unsuccessful at getting some of our folks who are closeted to send money and to send checks and to help the cause of those of us who are more active. What's it going to take and how do we reach that population?

By Jessica Xavier:

Money is the staple of politics. Living in Washington D. C., I'm familiar with a lot of the major gay and lesbian political organizations there. To give you quick statistics: Human Rights Campaign Fund collects, routinely, anywhere between five and seven million dollars a year, from not just closeted people, but people who are out, in the gay and lesbian and bisexual communities.

That's a lot of money, that buys a lot of access; it gets a lot of things photocopied, a lot of information to the right legislators. The transgendered community is a community triply impoverished. We've got, on the one hand, people who are going through transition, transsexuals and transgenderists. All their money is going to pay for medical conditions. They face an enormous economic discrimination when they transition, losing careers, professions, their means of making the money they need; and the little money they have left goes to their transition, to the

expenses of that and medical conditions.

On the other hand, we've also got a community that's really at a distance from itself because of its shame. Transition, transsexuals and transgenderists and crossdressers for the most part, who have a difficulty dealing with their shame issues are once at a distance from their community; to contribute to that community would require writing checks and acknowledging their connection to and support of that community.

We have a problem being activists, because we're looked at with a lot of suspicion by our community. Most of the community wants to remain quietly silent, while at the same time, more than a few of us are going through a lot of discrimination right now. Really, what we're talking about is pride, building a transgender pride. If we can't feel good about ourselves, how can we ask anybody to write out a check to a political group that's just starting up, that has a longitudinal 20 to 50 year struggle ahead, facing enormous odds. "It's Time Maryland" started last December. We now have 30 people on our mailing list.

I'm fighting a state-wide gay and lesbian organization, the Free State Justice Campaign, which has over 1100 people on its mailing list, \$23,000 a year budget and also is getting tens of thousand of dollars pumped into the state by the Human Rights Campaign Fund simply because they think this is a state that can get an antidiscrimination bill passed. Well, of course "It's Time Maryland" doesn't have any money. We've got some good people. We're lobbying, we're talking to people in the state legislator. We're also trying to insinuate ourselves into the Free State Justice Campaign to get them to accept transgender inclusion, but this is really hard. The shame issues are always there. And the shame issues are always there within the gay and lesbian community.

In terms of the sexual minorities movement for the '90s, the question is not, Who's going to lead. We'll always have enough self-important people for that. The real question is, Who will follow? That's the serious question that we've got to address.

ENDA -- EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

By Lisa Middleton.

One of the places we're also looking for action is at the federal level. At the federal level there have been a number of discussions in regard to the ENDA bill, the lack of inclusion of transgendered people in ENDA. Karen, as you look at that bill and you look at the progress and chances for success, do you think it makes sense for us to be putting our efforts into federal action or concentrating on local, states and cities and counties where we might be more successful?

By Karen Kerin.

Lisa, I wish it was easy to answer that question with one or the other. An unfortunate part of it is

you've got to do it all. Discrimination against us occurs at virtually every level. Let me go back to ENDA and explain a little bit about it first.

ENDA stands for Employment Non-discrimination Act. It was a misnomer when it was introduced originally in Congress. It was only intended to work for the gay and lesbian community. We were excluded. I was quite fortunate in that the senator from my state is a political ally whom I have worked with in the past. He was very pleased to invite me, with a small delegation, to go down and testify. Phyllis and I were that small delegation. There were two of us.

By Raymond Hill:

We had them outnumbered.

By Karen Kerin:

We had them outnumbered and surrounded. You're right, Ray. I have to tell you, it was a successful trip, and I want to tell you little bit about that hearing and then I'll update you on events.

At that hearing, we weren't allowed to speak. We sat there with our protest badges on, that Phyllis cooked up before she left Houston. Here I was, running for the Vermont House of Representatives, and I had political buttons with my name on them and we both wore those buttons. A lovely black gentleman by the name of Reg Jones, who's one of Senator Jeffords' people, stayed with us the entire time.

We were treated like royalty. We had use of the phones. We had a conference room assigned to us. We had duplicating facilities taken care of. We were provided telephone numbers. I've got to tell you, Phyllis Frye can sure impress you when she takes you over there to the Courthouse Club, but I don't think she ever got treated any better than she got treated in Senator Jeffords' office.



**Raymond Wayne Hill, Prisoner Rights Moderator, ICTLEP
107 Supreme Court 2502**

Winner of ICTLEP Transgender Champion Award

We were subsequently able, in that hearing, to get our written testimony in. Reg Jones made copies of what Phyllis had written up and what I had written up. It went into the congressional record and, although she and I have never talked about, I got a number of phone calls from people who had read the congressional record and found our stories and who wanted to talk about it.

One of them was an attorney in Illinois, I believe, who had had a very unfortunate accident with a firearm and was emasculated because of it. That attorney was going to have a sex change because he was somewhat transgendered anyway, and he wanted to know what my experiences had been in dealing with it. So that was an interesting conversation to have. But back to the hearing again. During the course of us being seated there, there was suddenly a bunch of noise and a very large fundamentalist group came in and they were protesting. They were allowed to stay in the hearing room. They didn't get to speak. I don't know whether they ever got anything into the congressional record or not. But here were the two of us sitting very properly, like a couple of professional ladies ought to. The last panelist, someone who was very opposed to us, made a comment like, How would you like it if you were an employer and you had one of your male employees come in and – what was it?

By Phyllis Frye:

5-inch heels and a sequined dress.

By Karen Kerin:

5-inch heels and a sequined dress.

By Phyllis Frye:

We were sitting there in business suits.

By Karen Kerin:

I don't know if anyone could hear Phyllis, but we were sitting there in business suits and we looked very professional and here's this clown making a remark like that and we got no opportunity to rebut it.

Well, unfortunately, at that time, it was a democratic congress. Senator Jeffords didn't have much say as to who was going to get to speak, so we never got the opportunity to rebut that. I regret that very deeply.

It never got out of committee in the senate, really. It died. We got our amendment introduced. It went into the markup as I understand it and it just didn't get out of that Congress.

It was just reintroduced yesterday. It had been my understanding that it was going to be reintroduced with our language in it. This morning I called Reg Jones to find out what the straight skinny was. I was a little bit disturbed because there were a lot of people saying they didn't think

it went in that way. Well, indeed it didn't. It went in as the original ENDA bill had been introduced. There are a whole lot of ins and outs on this. I'm going to mention a few of them.

The other senator, the Republican senator from Kansas, Nancy Kassebaum, is the chair of that committee. She says it is definitely not going to get out of that committee during this year, perhaps next year.

So, we've got some time to work on this thing. Reg Jones assured me that Senator Jeffords, in the next markup, would get our language included in there. That won't slip by again. I intend to make sure he does get that change made. I've explained to Reg just exactly why the senator needs to do that and if he conveys my message with his usual diplomacy, I'm sure the message will get through.

By Sarah DePalma:

As I was listening to Karen talk, I had a thought. What we do up here, what we are as supposed "leaders", I guess what we do has its importance. But in some sense I think we have the wrong people up here. I think the heroes, the real leaders are people like Wendy Allen from Houston who has made it a point to work on behalf of transgendered homeless people and street kids. I think the heroes are our friends from Canada who are working people, with AIDS.

They're doing things quietly, in some cases behind the scenes and, at least in Wendy's case, when it's necessary to become more public, they do so. But in the end, we're going to win our battle one person at a time. That's the end. That's what it comes down to. And though it's nice that we're up here, I want to give credit where I think it's due. The credit is really due to the people out there who doing what Wendy's doing, what these folks are doing, what the other people are doing behind the scenes to win this, one voice at a time, one person at a time. They're the people I really respect.



Sarah Depalma, Director, It's Time America

By Karen Kerin:

You got that right. But I'll tell you somebody else I have a lot of respect for, and that's the people who are able to get into government, and will help us. Reg Jones is a black man. I've got to tell you, he sure has been very willing to help us in any way that he could. This is a guy who's a staffer. That's somebody that ought to be a hero to our community because that's somebody who serves at the pleasure of a senator. I mean, he could be gone tomorrow if he displeases a senator. Those are the kind of people that we need. We need to find them on the Hill.

And come October 2nd and 3rd this year, Riki has done a real good job of locating quite a group of people, and we've got another group of people we're going to meld with it, and we're going to be on the Hill picketing. Transgendered people, other than the one time Phyllis and I went, haven't really had much opportunity to do that. We broke the ice, then. And then in March, a few of us gathered and went and saw some of the people on Congress. This is a real first. Transgendered people just haven't had that opportunity. This October 2nd and 3rd every single person in Congress is going to get visited. They're going to get visited by transgendered people. Now there's some people that are really heroes, because it's going to take a hell of a lot of guts for those people who are going to talk to people like Jessie Helms, the guy that cut us out of ADA.

By Lisa Middleton:

All right. To follow up on that, you mentioned the role of Reg Jones, which brings up staffers and aides to the legislators, which has always been tremendous source of getting any kind of legislation passed.

How do you propose to be effective with senators and congresspeoples' aides, and are there things that we out here can do to try to identify aides who may be very supportive and helpful and build those relationships?

By Karen Kerin:

When we go around doing the lobbying on the 2nd and 3rd, we'll be assigned a staffer. As soon as you have any kind of a meeting with anybody on the Hill, you get a staffer, and that person takes you by the hand, takes you in tow, and guides you wherever you're going to go and they're with you until you depart.

So you'll have a name, you'll have a person that you're going to talk to and that's a great help. It's also good, as we learned on the Hill when Phyllis and I went, to find out who your enemies are. There's a fellow by the name of Eskowitz who works for Senator Kennedy, and as much as Senator Kennedy beats the drum about believing in America and believing in civil rights and all those kinds of things, this fellow Eskowitz has got an entirely opposite view.

Eskowitz was outraged and incensed that we were there. He did everything he could to be

obstructive. Now, as it happens, Phyllis is a Democrat and I'm a Republican. I don't mean to introduce any politics here, but I think it's important to recognize that you can identify either party as being for us or against us. Jeffords is a Republican. He introduced the bill this year. Last Congress it was introduced by Kennedy, a Democrat.

So, the most important thing that we have to get through our heads, (and it's a hard political lesson, it's a real tough political lesson) is that you have to have a bipartisan approach if you're going to win. You have to have both parties, people in both parties, who are willing to help. So you have to get along with them. And it's surprising; your "friends" will turn up in the darndest places. You can't predict it.

By Lisa Middleton:

I know that.

Riki Ann, you've gone to a lot of work in regard to helping build a memorial to Brandon Teena and to make known the sacrifice that took place there. Unfortunately, too often our victims die twice; once at the hands of someone else and once in the silence that follows.

What do we need to learn? What do we need to do to ensure that at least that silence doesn't take place?

By Riki Ann Wilchins:

I guess we need to break it. That's the first thing that comes to mind. We can also up the heat. That would help, too.

I don't have any answer to that. There are a lot of people who face their challenges in small ways, in small towns, and their stories go unheard. They don't get the god-given opportunity to wear "Black Menace" t-shirts. It's important to show up for people like that, too.

I also need to say something totally irrelevant to this, which has been occurring to me as we've been talking this morning. I know that all of us face lots of challenges in being transgendered, or gender friendly, or whatever term we're mobilizing under this morning.

This community is disempowered, but I don't believe we are lacking in power. I believe we're lacking in belief. There are thousands and thousands and probably millions of us across the country. There are probably a couple of thousands of us that just go on the circuit every year to places like this. And places like this are important, because they give us a platform. But, too often, when I go to places like this -- and I don't mean to offend anybody anymore than I usually do -- what I see is a bunch of upper middle class white people congratulating themselves on what a great job they're doing.

It's a start, but it isn't the end of the road. This show needs to go on the road. It needs to go outdoors. It's not enough for us to sit in air-conditioned hotels in hundred dollar a night rooms and talk about what a great job we've done and who gets an award this year. The only thing that is stopping this movement from doing something important is this movement itself. The feminist movement was extremely successful in brewing the idea that the personal is political. This is an idea that most of us have not caught on to yet. Most of us assume that the humiliations and the shame that we go through are entirely private. When someone calls me "Mr." on the street or something, or someone harasses me and says, "Hey, are you a dyke?" or even calls me a fag, which happens from time to time, I'm supposed to assume that has something to do with the way I express my gender and it doesn't. It has to do with a system of oppression that describes bodies in various ways and tries to regulate identity. That battle is being fought on our bodies. If we start to realize that this is a group struggle, that these little private humiliations are shared, then we have the power to go back and contest them. That's one point that I want to make.

Next year -- we've talked about doing this in '97 -- about saying we're just going to have one big Gender Convention. We're going to do it in Washington D. C. Instead of 20 or 30 people up there or 40 or 50, there are going to be a thousand of us up there. There is nothing that stops this community from doing it. There are probably a thousand of us that go on the circuit each year. But we'd rather have a sip of martini and talk after hours about the great workshops we went to than go someplace and do something, because we haven't believed it's possible. I see more courage in this community, and more resourcefulness, and more people who are articulate and educated, but we don't have a consciousness of ourselves as a group, and we don't have shared politics.

And as we start to get that, all these things become possible. Once we start to realize that these personal problems are political and they are shared, we're sharing the same struggle in a lot of different ways.

The second point that I want to make real quickly, which is also relevant to your question; what keeps hitting me is that this community does not share a vision of itself as being any larger than itself. When we talk, we tend to talk about transsexual this and transsexual that and crossdresser.. . Oppression doesn't make you a virtuous person. There are crossdresser groups that don't want their transsexuals, and transsexual groups that don't want their crossdressers. There are a lot of groups that are uncomfortable with people of color in them. There are a lot of groups that I go to that are preoperative and don't want post-ops, or post-ops and don't want pre-ops, or males don't want women, or women don't want men. And no one knows what the hell to do with Holly Boswell these days.

That's not actually true. I know what to do with Holly but she won't let me. Yet. Yet.

We've got our own political problems, and our own blind spots and we need to start addressing them before we do take this show on the road. We need to start looking at our own politics and what we're doing to each other, and cementing these identities in place where you have to choose a gender expression. " Well, I'm not a crossdresser, I'm a transsexual." "I'm not a transsexual, I just

do this as a hobby on weekends." The gender craziness has got to stop someplace. I'm afraid it may not stop in this community. Sometimes I think we're just taking the same categories that were handed to us, and we're not going to make it okay to be a transsexual. My friends, I am not interested in being a transsexual, today. I am certainly not interested in being a post-op. I was never interested in being a pre-op. I don't even think I'm interested in being a woman or a lesbian. I am interested in finding some radical way to free identity beyond these categorical labels, so we can start to talk about each other as people instead of what box we're sitting in today. If all we do is try to cut another slice of identity pie, so that we get ours, leaving the work for Sheryl Chase and people like the intersexed to do their struggle, then I don't think we've done very much.

This movement should stand for something larger than just getting ours for transsexuals and transgendered people. It should be talking to folks about freeing identity, and freeing sexuality, and freeing our bodies from cultural regulation. That's not something I hear us talking about very much in these nice air-conditioned rooms. We can start to share that political vision, and we can realize that there are thousands and thousands of us who want to come out, who want to do things; we just don't know that we have brethren.

If we can just realize those two things, I think we can change the world, and I don't mean to engage in exaggeration. I honestly believe that, and that's the only reason I come to these places and wear these ridiculous black t-shirts. I think we have a compelling message. We are people whom no system can digest. We cross too many boundaries.

I hope we start to put that message out and I certainly hope we start to look at our own politics. I hope we start a gender revolution that starts to look at wider issues than just us getting ours, today.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON TRANSGENDER ACTIVISM

By Jane Fee:

One of the things that I'd like to address for a moment here, because Riki spoke about pride, and probably most of you that have ever been familiar with an IFGE convention know that for several years it was built as a coming together, working together workshop for leaders in the community. I can tell you as chairperson of the '96 convention in Minneapolis that I'm pulling out all the stops and changing things. The billing for '96 is "Minnesota Pride Celebration." That's the name of our convention. And the gay, lesbian, bisexual community are a part of it for the first time.

So, we welcome you all to come there and share in a new experience. We are going to also have a track of instruction for helping professionals, so that we will award CEUs for psychologists, social workers. I've talked to Phyllis today, and she's indicated a willingness to put on a track for CLEs so that we can help to further train the people in that section of the country on what we're all about,

and help promote our future well being.

By Lisa Middleton:

Gordene kept wanting to know what her question was. Gordene doesn't need a question, she just needs an opportunity to speak.

I look around this room and notice one thing that I'm interested in. You're on a university campus, but there are too many individuals who develop their activism at the worst possible age, their 30s and 40s, rather than when they were teenagers and college students. That activism should have a full lifetime to develop and to grow.

What's it going to take for the transgendered movement to become a part of the other movements that are taking place on campus, and for our new leaders to emerge there and to begin to take a part in our community much, much earlier?

By Gordene MacKenzie:

I think that, on the side of an institution, we need a great deal of dynamite, and dynamite not just to blow up external structures that do nothing but oppress and crush individuals and individual's lives and individuals who were so boxed in that they're no longer here and I'm thinking of Brandon Teena, Sylvia Rodriguez. I'm thinking of number of other people that have gone on.

What we need to do, and perhaps what education can do, if we don't become institutionalized ourselves in the process, is to dynamite the internal. One of the things that I'm hopeful for in terms of education is some of the new discourse that's coming out, and here I'm citing Martine Rothblatt's book. I'm thinking of a wonderful book by Minnie Bruce Platt, who is the lover of Leslie Feinberg, who is saying, "I love a transgenderist; transgenderists are worthy to be loved. In fact, they're not just worthy to be loved, I feel very lucky because this person has enriched my life." And Leslie Feinberg's great book, saying, "... at one point I was really disturbed by seeing two butches together. I couldn't understand it, and I freaked out and then two years later admits that she had to go back and call the two butches and say, "Look, I progressed. I'm sorry. Something happened. Something blew up and I saw that there were other possibilities."

Certainly, Bornstein's book, where Bornstein says, "I'm not a woman, and I'm not a man, but I keep one foot in woman because I've got to be somewhat grounded." And Martine who is saying, "Let's not check those males or females;" All this stuff is starting to come out. The borders are being dynamited, but the challenge is to dynamite, blow up the paradigms that we have internalized in ourselves, to get rid of all the gender propaganda that we have heard from the moment we were born and that we have been infiltrated with. A good way to do that is to let people know how gender oppresses in everyday life. How each person is oppressed by gender.

I hearken back to what you said in your talk that could this become a gender oppression movement? Could we become larger than just a transgender movement? Every individual there, on one of our most basic levels is oppressed by gender, is controlled by gender. Our lives are restricted by gender, and we need to look at the way that race and ethnicity and class compound those oppressions. We need to also think about the labeling that we do and how each label that we have can function if we're not careful; like a box and that box locks other people out. Then we have to ask, Who's doing the labeling? Who can be let in and who can't be let in? And we have to be very, very careful about all that.

So my sense is that we really think about dynamiting the structures that no longer work, but dynamiting something internal first, in causing an incredible explosion that I hope will take us into the 21st century, and will really make a world where the oppression is not what it is now, where people are not made to feel bad because you internalize other people's lies, misinformation and myths. We have to purge ourselves, get rid of it and refuse to accept those any longer and have a huge explosion.

By Lisa Middleton:

Do we have questions from the floor, anyone?

(No response.)

I have one more. I'd like each of you to talk about the issue of making one-on-one personal contact with your individual U. S representative, U. S. state senator and state representative.

How do you propose we go about doing that? What are the kinds of things that each and every one of us can do with our local people? Jane.

By Jane Fee:

Well, first of all, you don't have to go to Washington to do that. Every one of your senators and representatives has a local office at home. I would encourage you to determine when it is that they will have some kind of an open forum or a speaking engagement locally and make a point of going there and personally introducing yourself. Establish what the telephone communications are with their organization, who you can write to and so forth.

This is a way that you can do it on a very local basis. If you wish to not reveal yourself because of fear or necessity, you can use any name that you want in approaching the people. The most important thing is that you are one of the voters in their particular district.

By Karen Kerin:

I have to agree a hundred percent with Jane's description, but I'd modify it just slightly. There are two different approaches that you can take. If you're in the closet, you're probably a lot better off

not to go visit in person, because you're going to feel uncomfortable and you're going to make them uncomfortable as a consequence. Write to them. Write to them regularly. Sign your name of choice and be consistent with it. You'll start getting letters back. You will establish a dialogue with someone who's on the staff of these elected officials. That's real important to do.

If you're comfortable and you're out, by all means go and see them. There is nothing in this world that diffuses the gender bomb anywhere near as well as shaking their hand, and their realization that this is a real, live flesh and blood person who can vote for them or against them. Believe me, that's the most electric thing you can do. It really works.

By Gordene MacKenzie:

We have a governor who left the hate bill on his desk without signing it, with the old story of "no special privileges". Then announced that he thought that militia could help us in stressed times, maybe to protect us. So you see, we don't have a lot of luck right now in New Mexico. But I think that you have to work at every level. My level may be dynamite, screaming, raving, doing the outrageous because I don't seem to work on any other level. However, I can instruct my students to be more rational and just flood them on every level that you can. Get students, get people from every level to begin to write letters.

In fact, write numerous letters and sign many names yourselves and just flood them with everything that you can, all of the information you can and always wear plastic gloves like the cops at the White House when dealing with them before you go to dinner.

By Riki:

Well, I just have to say, Show up this October 2nd and 3rd for the first national gender lobbying day. We'll be walking around, and talking to all these nice representatives and their staffers; talking about the challenges that we face October 2nd and 3rd, right after Southern Comfort.

At this moment, it looks like we had about 70 people signed up, so if you're interested in coming and talking to your Congressperson, or to mine, or even to Dallas Denny's, then please catch one of us after lunch and give us your name, address, phone number and E-mail address and be there for lobbying days. Get in someone's transphobic face; stand up for yourself. We're going to keep coming back. There is going to be a gender revolution, and we are going to win. You might as well be there.

By Sarah DePalma:

I'm going to depart from the party line here. I think the question is moot. First of all, I think there are a hell of a lot of transgendered people who vote against their own self-interest. I am real tired of hearing transgendered people say, "Yeah I know this guy was a homophobe, and I know he's

against transgendered people, but by God, he's got an economic interest." How dumb do we have to be? I'm sorry. I realize that's departing from the party line, but enough of that.

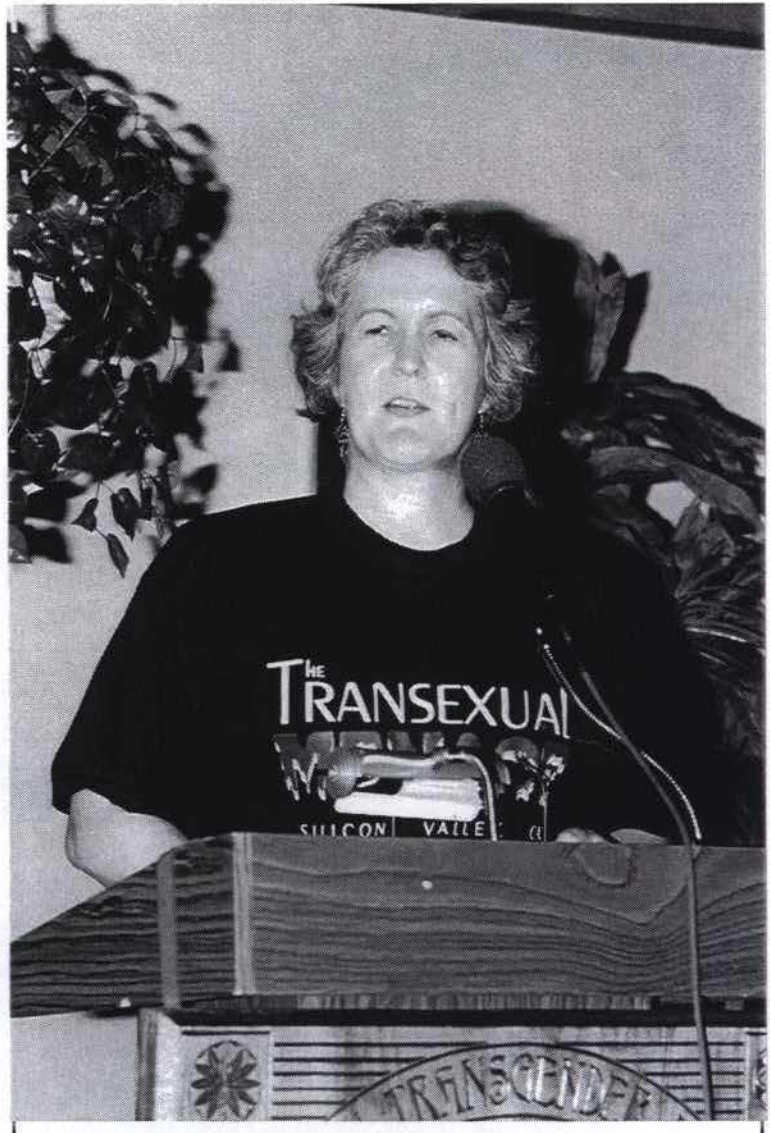
The best thing that you can do, number one, is learn to vote your own self interest. You know, I'm sorry, but if you're going to vote for somebody who would be in favor of putting you in jail if they knew you were a crossdresser, then you're just not really very bright.

It's nice to be polite, but that's the truth of it. That's the first thing you can do, vote your own self interest.

Number two: if you want to do something for yourself, know who your local politicians are. We can't influence the presidential race, but we can influence City Council. We can't influence who becomes the United States senator, but we can influence who becomes the state representative. State representatives run on zero budgets. They run on volunteer power. If you want to do something good for the community, find a state representative who will work with your views, then get out there and work your butt off for them, so that Phyllis and I can go to the legislature and beat them up.

It's nice to talk about all these nice things that we ought to do. But when I go and talk to gender groups and I say to them, "You need to write letters to your Congress people," I still get people who say to me, "Oh, I can't write that. They'll see the address and they'll know who wrote it." Oh, grow up. I'm just tired of hearing excuses. If you really want to do something good for yourself, you ought to do something good for your government. Get a grip on your fear, get a grip on those around you who have got the fear, shake them until they come to their senses and then say to them, "We're going to go out and we're going to work for our self interest." When we reach the point that we're adult enough to do that, I will celebrate. I'll strip naked for you, okay?

By Jessie:



**Phyllis Randolph Frye, Attorney
Executive Director, ICTLEP**

Amen. Amen, Sarah. Lobbying is just gender education at a more ambitious level. When we meet with our representatives, we need to be conscious of our reality and of theirs. You can expect some transphobia. You can expect some resistance, but showing the human face, and pressing that hand into your representative's is the most important single act you can do. You're transcending your own shame when you do that. Face, give them face time. Show up, be counted.

I've been working now with my one of my state delegates for about the past six months, because I've been in court for a year and a half fighting to get Maryland to revise their antiquated laws governing the reissuance of new birth certificates to transsexuals. I've got my own bill coming out next session, simply because I stuck to it and I fought for it. I've got a state senator who's going to sponsor it and I've got a state delegate who's going to sponsor it, and yeah, it can be done. Show up and do it. That's all it takes.

By Phyllis Frye:

L. A. Lisa handed me the mike to do the Donahue thing for question and answers, and you know I've never turned down a microphone, but I wanted to do a quick followup on that. As far as contacting your local representatives, don't be afraid of these people. They work on votes. I understand there may be a Senator Helms and there may be a Representative Dornen, but most people who are running for elective office don't want to make enemies. They may not be your friend, but they don't want to make enemies. I assure you that in the '70s and in the early '80s I was coming out to my state senator and my state representative and my U. S representative and not a single one of them called my spouse's employer and outed her. Not a single one of them organized a cross burning on my front yard. Okay.

The one person you don't want to be afraid of is the person who is counting on your vote. They don't want you to organize an opposition. They don't want to give you a reason to work against them, to raise money against them. They'd rather just kind of leave you dumb and quiet. So it's going to be a very rare instance that that person is going to make your life miserable.

So come out, come out, come out if nothing else to that elected official. That's the only way it's ever going to work. Sarah DePalma and Phyllis Frye are known in this area as "Thunder and Lightning." No one knows which one is Thunder and no one knows which one is Lightning, but they always know that when one rumbles the other one is close behind.

We've got a few minutes for Q and A. I'm going to do Donahue. Wendy.

By Wendy Allen:

My name is Wendy Allen. Y'all don't know me very much yet, but I'm getting very comfortable being in public. This is something new for me. I spent 39 years of being afraid and ashamed and put to shame for who I am. I never liked the other person. I never felt comfortable as the other

person, and I am proud of who I am now. I like the person I am now. And these two people have not gotten enough credit for the things that they have done here in Texas. My hat's off to them. They have made me feel proud of who I am. I stand up and say the thing I'm saying today and going out to senators and representatives and judges and going, "Hi, my name is Wendy Allen and I'm transgendered. How do you feel about that?"

You're going to find people like Dee McKellar and my roommate, Denise Cobb here in Texas, to name a few. and we're not ashamed of being transgendered. Thank you.

By Phyllis Frye:

You just heard from an ordained Baptist minister. Any other questions?

By Lisa Middleton:

I'm going to jump in with one, Phyllis.

By Phyllis Frye:

That's all right. You're the hostess.

By Lisa Middleton:

I get to. You know, one of the things we haven't talked about very much is local action. I realize not every city in the world is San Francisco. That's our fortune and your misfortune. But local actions, what took place in San Francisco — we got an ordinance passed in the past year, and James will talk about that more. There's a wonderful lady who could not be here, Shelly Scalari. Shelly Scalari made everything happen in San Francisco, but she made it happen over the course, not of a few minutes talking about transgender issues; she made it happen by being transgendered openly, out in public with a legislator; not for weeks, not for months, but for years on every single kind of issue that you can imagine. It was interesting to talk to Shelly as the legislation was being passed.

If you talked to Shelly as the legislation was being passed, she would talk more about the toilet controversy in the City of San Francisco than she did about transgendered issues. It wasn't transgendered toilets, it was the public toilets on Market Street that we were trying to get built. She was an activist on all kinds of issues. And then, when she sat down and said, "By the way, I have something to talk about for my community," she already had the relationships. It's those kinds of things that we need to be doing, just everyday issues that affect us.

By Jessica Xavier:

I'd like to address that about local issues. There's one thing we can do. Almost every single urban

center in this country has a Human Rights Commission. A City, Municipal, or Urban Human Rights Commission. If you get cases in the your city where you know of discrimination, harassment, violence committed against transgendered people, report them. Get the people who are victims to report it, themselves, to the commissions. Even though there are no protections, usually, in those municipalities, unless you live in places like Santa Cruz or San Francisco or St. Paul; even though there isn't anything, if they start getting enough cases, they can do what San Francisco did and you can launch an investigation sponsored by the State Human Rights Commission that can lead to something, bigger, later. Use the HRCs. They're there for everybody who's been discriminated against.

By Lisa Middleton:

That's outstanding. One of the things about HRCs is that when you start using them, you may find yourself an HRC representative like we found Larry Brinken, a salaried employee who decides that he wants to get interested in this community, that he's offended by the kind of discrimination that takes place, and now you suddenly have an insider working for you.

By Jane Fee:

One thing I would like to add here, when we're talking about how to get to know your politician and so forth, there are other things that make a great deal of difference, politically. Out in Minnesota, again, we got our act together by soliciting the support of other organizations. We worked in conjunction with the labor unions. We worked in conjunction with corporations. We work in conjunction with the council of churches in this state. We used all sorts of organizations to expand our voice. You can't do the job alone. You need support. You need support from other communities.

Don't be afraid to go to them and try to solicit their support. One of the things we also did was to work for the election of officials that we knew were going to be friendly. We worked as far in advance as the primary to make sure that they got their name on the ballot at the end. We went around and distributed circulars door to door.

It takes this kind of a grass roots efforts, sometimes. One of the things which is true about the political community is that every politician owes another one somewhere along the line. "You vote for this, and I'll remember it in the future."

The same thing works for us. Find somebody else's cause; somebody's interested in clean water, somebody's interested in foster homes for children. Find any cause, and you help those people with that cause if you can believe in it. Then you must ask for their help when it comes time to support something that is transgender related. They'll owe you one.

By Phyllis Frye:

Any other questions?

By Alice:

We talked about working with the gay and lesbian community. First, I want to make it explicit rather than implicit. The tremendous number of us are gay. The tremendous number of us are lesbian so, we're talking about our direct rights, as well as piggy backing on that community. But they are also very much more organized than we are, and they're desperately in need of workers. If you can volunteer for a representative, there's also a tremendous amount of opportunities in the gay and lesbian community for changes to start happening.

Phyllis, I've been wanting to say this for a while, so I'll say it to the whole room. When you threatened to disrupt the march on Washington – Stonewall – I thought that was, at best, misguided. However, it was probably the best thing that could have ever have happened, because suddenly we've been catapulted to a real prominent position in the gay and lesbian presence, and suddenly, every transgendered organization in Atlanta is wanting transgendered people on their board. Two of us are on the Board of Pride in Atlanta, and guess what, the name is changing. Not only are we being inclusive for transgendered people, – we didn't want to just tack our name on it – it's going to be Atlanta Pride for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and anyone else who wants on the parade.

By Phyllis Frye:

Thank you. Thank you so much.

By Lisa Middleton:

If I can just add a quick word about the name, does it make a difference? You bet it does. This past Tuesday evening, when I was having my big dinner with all of our executives, one of the vice presidents turned to me and said, "You folks really are coming around, aren't you? You're becoming somebody. I saw your name on the poster for the pride parade."

By Phyllis Frye:

That's right. Thank you for what you said about Stonewall. That was a very lonely six months. There were people all over the country who were questioning. They thought I was plumb crazy. I want to acknowledge – I've acknowledged her before, and I'm going to acknowledge her again – Jessica Xavier. While I was the bad cop in this affair, Jessie was the good cop, and she intentionally took a tremendous amount of hits in a lot of places where I didn't go, so that I could be the bad cop that she could point to. And also Sharon Ann Stuart. I don't know if Sharon Ann is in here with me or not. But up until 12 hours before the march, when we decided we had gone

as far as we could, Sharon was willing to lie down in the street with me and be arrested that day. That took a tremendous amount of courage.

Back to constituencies, which is what it's all about. Last March, Riki Ann and Karen and her SO, Mary, and Jane and Trish and I were on the Hill for two days, and two days only. In those four days, we met, personally, one-on-one with several United States senators, several members of Congress themselves and in other cases their staff people. We didn't get laughed at a single time. We didn't get snickered at a single time. The reason why this was true, as I said before, is because they're not interested in making enemies. We got taken seriously in very many ways.

But you know which states we talked to? They were the states that let us in the door: New York, Vermont, Minnesota and Texas. Because we were constituents. Did we have any luck talking to Illinois? Very little. Did we have any luck talking to Louisiana? Very little. Did we have any luck talking to Nevada? Very little. So, in October, we don't need 500 people from California in Washington, and 300 people from New York and 200 people from Texas. We need at least one person from New Mexico. We need at least one person from Ohio. We need at least one person from Illinois. We need at least one person from Minnesota so we can get into those doors as constituents.

We will not be laughed at. We were not laughed at last March. Riki, tell them what we did in those two days, just 30, 60 seconds. Where we treated respectfully? Where we listened to?

By Riki Ann Wilchins:

You don't screw around with Phyllis. Of course, she was treated respectfully. When she raised her voice in one session, I damn near wet my pants, and I'm sure the legislative assistant did. (And Phyllis does the same thing when Trish raises her voice!)

We were treated great. They were really curious. It was like their own private Geraldo show and they had no idea what was going on. They would say, "Well, aren't you covered under this gay and lesbian stuff coming through?" And we'd say, "No, the courts didn't say anything about this being gay and lesbian, necessarily." Then they'd say, "Well, aren't you covered under the sex discrimination, this stuff for the women?" And we'd answer, "No, that's not been held by the courts to apply to us, either." And then they'd realize, "Oh, you're not covered at all." And we'd go, "Now you got it."

It's just a matter of showing up and educating. It's not a matter of being extremely clever or verbal or any kind of tricks, just showing up and saying, "Hi, I'm transgendered and here's what's happened to me. This is the kind of thing I've faced in the last couple of years", is enough to get them thinking. It's more a matter of establishing a moral presence and opening dialogue than actually getting them to do anything concrete, today, about it. It's a long term kind of thing.

In spite of what people say about the radical right and the shift and all this thing, I don't think that

the kind of phobia, the gender phobia, the transphobia that we see is going to get a lot worse. I actually think this is the high water mark and it's only going to get less. People are getting the message. When I go and talk to colleges like Yale or Columbia, or Rutgers, these kids have got the message. In fact, they're farther out there than we are. I go into rooms where there are people who are more gender ambiguous than me and I can't figure out what the hell they are and I love that.

So the message -- the message is definitely out there.

By Phyllis Frye:

Sarah, tell them real quickly, again, so they'll feel comfortable with their own member of Congress or their own state senator. Tell them the quick little story about how we met the speaker of the house.

By Sarah DePalma:

Well, I'm kind of concerned. Riki, you told me there are legislators wearing pink panties. You didn't mention that to the audience.

By Riki Ann Wilchins:

Jessie Helms does, but only when he votes against us.

By Phyllis Frye:

We only have one minute. Tell them the story.

By Sarah DePalma:

It so happened that at the end of one of the legislative sessions, we got onto the elevator. There were five of us, I think. And it happened we were on the elevator with the speaker of the house. Phyllis was complaining about the elevator in the Harris County courthouse, which apparently is extremely slow. One of the people on the elevator began talking to her and, come to find out, we were on the elevator with the speaker of the house of representatives. He got off and he went his way. I turned to Phyllis and said, "You did realize who that was, didn't you?" She said, "No." I told her and her response was, "Damn, if I'd known that, I wouldn't have let him off the elevator."