

# TRANNIES IN LOVE

FREE! FINAL ISSUE



## TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY SHOWS OFF COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL HISTORIC ARCHIVES

Unique Collection Of Several Hundred Newsletters And Documents  
Reveal Over 35 Years Of Capitol Area Transgender History

trannies in love p.o.b.66426 albany ny 12206

# TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY SHOWS OFF COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL HISTORIC ARCHIVES

## Unique Collection Of Several Hundred Newsletters And Documents Reveal Over 35 Years Of Capitol Area Transgender History

ARCHIVES MADE PUBLIC LOCALLY WITH PERMANENT DONATION TO SUNY  
A Several-Thousand Page How-To Guide In TG Relationships And Building Community

On Sept. 12 TG activists unveiled this extensive collection of local TG history to be donated to the SUNY Library M.E. Grenander Dept of Special Collections and Archives Public Affairs and Policy Archives for preservation and public use. The archives include over 140 issues of the TVIC newsletter from 1972 to 1984 and about 140 issues of the Transgender Independence Club newsletter from 1987 to 2001. Hundreds of issues of other local and regional journals are included along with collections of some national TG magazines and nearly 20 hours of Albany Gender Project and Trannies In Love videos, posters, and thousands of pages of TGIC and Transgender Capitol District Online e-list print-outs from recent years. Much of the archive was from the collection of former longtime TGIC president Winnie Brandt.

The local TG Archives show how we've been a real community with a collective life and traditions and continuity. It shows what our issues have been, what we keep rehashing, what works, what doesn't, and who the personalities have been and how they've helped the community. Reprints of classics from this collection are elsewhere in this issue.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO CHARLENE DODGE

Congrats are in order to Charlene, Director of the Albany Gender Project, for joining the Board of Directors of Holding Our Own at the Womens Building. The AGP has meetings every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday evening of the month at the Womens Building at 79 Central Ave. in Albany. Phone 518-785-7866.

### TRANNY ASSAULTED IN SCHENECTADY

Suspect Randy Crandell Subsequently Flees Area In Fear Of Sissies

Our own Kaylie Lavedure was attacked in her driveway Aug 4 by 43 year old trash element Randy Crandell, a neighbor who repeatedly yelled that he was going to "mess up (you) fucking faggots". Crandell claimed he was having a bad day and appeared to be quite drunk. He never touched Kaylie, but punched her car as she drove away and continued raving for nearly an hour in the street about faggots until shortly before the police arrived and took a report and visited his house.

A warrant was later issued for Aggravated Harassment against Randy and a request for a Protection Order was made. The street became considerably more quiet except for occasional outbursts of Randy yelling at Kaylie or carrying on about faggots. Almost two months after the incident Randy Crandell's family moved. We shouldn't complain. The street cops and detectives in Schenectady have always been courteous and helpful to me, although that's just me and I'm uncommonly charming. The neighborhood's picked up considerably the past two years. And Randy's gone.

In making our rounds to find out who catalogues bias crimes like this we found several dead-ends and misinformation, from government and advocacy group sources. Ross Levi at the Empire State Pride Agenda finally told us that the police index bias incidents when a person reports them and make quarterly reports of them to the Dept. of Criminal Justice Services. It's important for us to know about this procedure. We rate the Empire State Pride Agenda and the NY Civil Liberties Union as the most helpful and informed places to go for assistance with reporting a hate crime.

ESPA - 518-472-3330. NYCLU - 518-436-8594.

### GENDER-REASSIGNMENT SURGEON DR. YVES MENARD ALMOST KILLS PATIENT - STILL TRYING

Dr. Yves Menard has been one of the greatest friends and advocates of transgendered people and a valued forerunner in surgical technique for Gender Reassignment Surgery. He deserves all of the recognition and thanks he receives. For the past decade, however, increasing numbers of poor or questionable surgical outcomes by Menard has caused growing concern in various circles. Menard has reportedly been considering retirement for years. It's high time.

Earlier this year an area transsexual and long-time regular in the community essentially expired after being anesthetized in preparation for GRS under Dr. Menard. She was revived and her surgery performed two days later. She has not been doing well since, to put it euphemistically.

Of over a dozen girls we know who've had their surgery with Menard, only three claim no problems whatsoever with the outcome. The rest run the gamut, from permanent discoloration and/or pain or numbness to fistulas. Popped sutures seem common and we've seen two-inch bleeding vaginal lesions dismissed by him. Subsequent immune system disorders, or relapses, appear almost universal. Of course almost all the girls are from the local area and a dozen isn't a conclusive survey and there are extenuating circumstances in several cases.

The immune system disorders have many possible causes particular to the transsexual experience that researchers are just discovering. In recent years some transsexual groups around the country have independently been addressing this issue, particularly severe allergies onset and disabling Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. We have more info on this in this issue. Little is done by transsexuals' medical caregivers at this time to avoid these serious risks in advance. In the case of Menard's practice in Montreal, we don't know of any medical institution in the U.S. that would encourage patients after a comparable surgery to get out of bed in three days and be competing to see who can be hiking the most miles within a week. It's not allowed here. Neglectful aftercare has been a serious issue.

Whatever the causes, we won't be able to continue thanking Menard for crippling so many sisters and unloading them in such a profound scope on local TG communities to die within a couple of years of their surgery from medical neglect as we've seen here. We don't need that burden. Dr. Menard should not be doing GRS anymore and the aftercare at his practice is not adequate for many of his patients.

### TRANSGENDER INDEPENDENCE CLUB DRIES UP, BLOWS AWAY

TGIC has finally closed down after the past year and a half of serious dysfunction. Prior to this last administration TGIC had its ups and downs, but as a rule had about 50 members, sometimes as many as over 100, since 1987. One or two dozen would often meet at their attic clubhouse in Albany as frequently as once or twice a week. For almost two years, after abandoning traditional TGIC principles, disallowing past activities and programs and actively alienating all but a tiny group, they closed their clubhouse.

News on this page is almost a year old. We got delayed.

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**Ironweed Collective meeting. 98 Grand St., Albany. Mondays, 7 PM:**  
The Ironweed Collective is organizing a space at 98 Grand St., which will be a meeting space for activists and community members, a library, and an artists' workshop, including a music studio. 436-0929.

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#### RANDOM STORIES

...SPARKED BY ROCKS THROWN BY BULLIES...

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TALES OF A STONE BUTCH | SEX, POVERTY, LAZINESS  
ATTEMPTS AT WORK... GUN FIRE, HOPE, ILLNESS...  
IF I CAN LAUGH AT MY LIFE, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO

CHRISTOPHER ROSS  
P.O. BOX 1811  
SANTA CRUZ, CA  
95061-1811

It ain't beach balls but I can still hear the screaming roller coaster  
from my porch...

RUMORS HAVE THE POWER TO  
CREATE FALSE REALITIES—AND  
LIFE-THREATENING SITUATIONS.

# TVIC

ALBANY, NEW YORK  
Vol. 2 No. 16 April 14, 1973

PRESIDENT: William M. Thordson  
1106 Broadway  
Albany, N. Y. 12206  
Phone: 518-536-8806

Newsletter Editors:  
Helen  
and  
Wilma Thordson

Wow Wow Wow another month passed by:

You know it is hard to believe these months go by so fast, it seems like only yesterday the girls were here. Again this month we had three new faces at the meeting. First we'll talk about Sheila E. who came all the way from Monroeville, Pa. Sheila came in by plane, then rented a car, got her room at the motel. Sheila came down before dressing and brought a case of Cold Duck as an introduction to our group. Jo and Laura made a toast to Sheila and welcomed her as a new member. Sheila then made a toast to the whole group. Sheila was dressed in a White and Navy pleated dress, as the evening wore on she changed to a White gown with an overlay of Green and White Chiffon, very pretty. Our thanks to you Sheila, and may we see you again.

Our next new member was Barbara S. from Colonie, Barbara came dressed in Brown Mini Skirt and Sweater with sequins, lace stockings and heels. Boy: was she nervous. I felt her shake right thru her clothing. But like I said before it only lasts a little while and as the others talk with the new gals they loosen up. I am sure we will see Barbara again.

Our third new member was also Barbara S. from Schenectady. Barbara came in an Orchid Pants outfit. Incidentally, Orchid happens to be my favorite color. This Barbara was also a little nervous, but made friends fast. We're hoping to see you again Barbara.

I want to thank Sheila for the Bottle of My Sin Perfume, I will use it with pleasure. Our hats off to the three new members, who made it out of the closet to amongst all her new found Sisters.

Seems like Laura from Conn. always has a surprise up her sleeve. This time she had Louise of Conn. come dressed in the uniform of our Florence Witengale, both of them came dressed in Nurses Uniforms. You know what! they looked better than some female Nurses who went to college to study the course. Well Laura and Louise what can we expect of you next month?

At this time I would like to apologize for Wilma not dressing, she had a bad cold, and was not herself.

A birdie told me Pamela had a few of the girls at her home and entertained them with a Hymnologist. (did I spell it right) Oh, well did you have a good time girls.

By the way Pamela that outfit you had on Sat. was very nice.

I can't leave out the members who came this Sat. to the meeting so here they are. Michelle, Glens Falls, Crystal, Miranda:

## EDITORIAL

To leave the locked-room stage and to meet other TV'S is more than just another chapter in the biography of a human being. It is a tremendous leap, an event that marks a new outlook in ones concept of TVism and of our own personality.

Most of us start our TV life convinced that we are all alone, that we are in some respects a unique form of humanity, that whatever this "thing" is which endlessly gnaws somewhere in our body and mind no matter how much pleasure it suggests, must perforce be something dirty, twisted and perverted. Most of those TV's to whom TVism is ugly, distorted and undesirable, change their viewpoint after they meet others like themselves. A few remain, however, who vociferously condemn the very thing that makes them what they are. They tell other TV'S they should not dress, they should fight this "aberration" and they should hang their heads in shame for sheltering within their hearts a festering cancer such as this. They are self appointed champions of guilt. If they were religious fanatics, they

would definitely join the order of the flagellants and wear the cat-an-nine tails around their necks, instead of a pearl necklace. They claim to despise the very thing they love and can only see a shameful and dark future for those who have the courage to gladly accept themselves as they are and resolve to enjoy life as TV's. They are permanently afraid of themselves and almost make a fetish of their pessimism. If you gave them a garden to tend, they would surely buy a can of black paint and cover every flower with it.

But going back to those who do change after they meet others like themselves, the biggest change lies in the fact that for the first time the "girl-within" is called upon to be seen and two considerations emerge as the most important: personality behavior and its impact on others.

Lets look at the wife who is afraid of that freedom for her husband to do as he pleases-(that is to dress whenever he wants) will become an overwhelming, dailey obsession which will annihilate his masculine personality. In some cases she may be right. If you are an average man you should be able with her help, find the happy medium, together with "moderation" plus an vinced that we are all alone, that we are in some respects a unique form of humanity, that whatever this "thing" is which endlessly gnaws somewhere in our body and mind no matter how much pleasure it suggests, must perforce be something dirty, twisted and perverted. Most of those TV's to whom TVism is ugly, distorted and undesirable, change their viewpoint after they meet others like themselves. A few remain, however, who vociferously condemn the very thing that makes them what they are. They tell other TV'S they should not dress, they should fight this "aberration" and they should hang their heads in shame for sheltering within their hearts a festering cancer such as this. They are self appointed champions of guilt. If they were religious fanatics, they would definitely join the order of the flagellants and wear the cat-an-nine tails around their necks, instead of a pearl necklace. They claim to despise the very thing they love and can only see a shameful and dark future for those who have the courage to gladly accept themselves as they are and resolve to enjoy life as TV's. They are permanently afraid of themselves and almost make a fetish of their pessimism. If you gave them a garden to tend, they would surely buy a can of black paint and cover every flower with it.

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What is really difficult for most TV's is to maintain the balance between the two forms of behavior: the feminine and the masculine. The balance can be reached but it takes constant vigilance and care to keep it that way.

WILMA TVIC #73



**MUSIC & POETRY OPEN MIC**  
with Tina Andrus  
Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, 7PM  
Spring Eagle Magick Shoppe  
123 Jay St. Schenectady

## FEARS &amp; REASONS

To attain contentment when an individual is a Transvestite (TV) is probably one of the prime obstacles or challenges facing a TV. The issues of homosexuality, social conformity, family loyalty and self-respect are a few that seem to get all jumbled up. The values one had as a child and observed values of parents are the tool that we have to use to build our decisions and commitments. These values are blended with the emotions that we experience that excite or impress. Sometimes it is an escape into work or pretend that seems so real that one may think he can do whatever he wants to do. Some can and some can't, some should and some shouldn't.

To those who are of the persuasion of free thought, believing one should do whatever he feels is right for him, I respect your opinion. However, I do not agree with you. As we move through life, we interact with others. Some are impressionable and some are fearful of change or that which they do not understand. I feel that consideration of others feelings and emotions, especially those close to you, are as admirable as free thought. Many of the fears about public exposure are, I agree, all in one's mind and that strangers under most situations will probably not notice or even care. However, self-respect and your own expectations of yourself and what others close to you may think of your actions may be of some importance to a TV. Just as a TV may look up to an acquaintance or relative who is a doctor or just a plain good person, so others will form an opinion of you.

A fear to me may not be a fear to you, a reason to me may be a copout to you, a copout to me may be a reason to you. Firm convictions are good in most situations, that's a fact. Also a fact is that misery likes company.

Enthusiasm is contagious and a TV who has a persuasive attitude may pull into the pathway of no return some who are uncertain about which course to choose.

Are you on a course that may drag you down to a lower level of self-respect, or are you raising yourself up? Where are you going? Are you going to be a man to be looked down upon by others, or a man with principle and a part-time woman, also with principle.

Remember that in reality, life is not a perpetual high, unless you are staying that way with the use of drugs. How hard we try to achieve the letter-perfect deception or impersonation! Public or private exposure, male or reassignment, retro or homosexual? Indeed these are serious questions. Everyone sooner or later reaches his point of incompetency, as explained in the PETER PRINCIPLE. A man is an excellent worker, then is promoted to department head and does a lousy job. The man has reached his point of incompetency.

Some facts to remember in regards to "full-time woman" that are based upon personal interviews and research are that it would be impractical with few exceptions to continue the same lifestyle you did as a man. Theoretically, you should be able to, but based on the facts of those who have tried it, they leave behind a trail of broken homes and a loss of much that was attained to the point of the change. Sure, there are some for whom the dream has come true of an increase in status, but remember, many are called but few are chosen. As for the facts of those who have attained their dream, almost all are exceptionally well-educated or have amassed enough funds to make the change in style. For the rest, it is a meager existence of hand-to-mouth and 75-cent beers in places where one should usually travel in pairs.

In view of this, what can one do who has principle and still the desire? You might accept your fears as reasons which can logically be explained. This is a pretty good foundation for a decision with which we can live. Furthermore, if situations change, other decisions can be made to coincide at a latter time.

Whatever we do, we would want GOOD LUCK. And what is good luck? As a very worldly man, founder of a large corporation, who is now deceased, told me: GOOD LUCK IS WHEN OPPORTUNITY AND PREPAREDNESS MEET AT THE SAME TIME. A decision to wait until good luck is eminent for a pleasurable experience with minimum change of failure is still a decision. Consider, too, when you are sixty years old, as a woman, what can you do unless you have really prepared for that eventuality? Sit in a rest home and knit shawls? Or will you be able to live your life to the fullest?

What is important to you as a man should continue to be important to you as a part-time woman. Mannerisms, gestures, inflections and reflections may change, but not your integrity and not your values. If you are not a bar fly or a window shopper as a man, why be one as a woman? It seems logical that to function on familiar turf would be much easier and permit proper planning....

Wilma's Final - TVIC Dec 1983

## TRANSGENDER AND HONESTY - Callan Williams

How do you explain transgender? It's not an easy question, yet it is a question that we have all had to ask ourselves. We were children, and we knew that we were different, yet, for most of us, there was no one we could talk about that difference with. There was no easy place to get answers, no simple set of truths that we could look to understand ourselves.

Thankfully, for all of us who spent a lot of time looking between Transvaal and Transvaal in the card catalogue for Transvestitism, the only subject with even a listing for a long time, things are changing. We can thank the work of the pioneers for this, and be happy that kids growing up today will not have nearly as hard a time as we did, though it is still not easy.

But with the lack of information, we all had to invent our own answers, develop our own systems of understanding to give our world a context. And because there were going to be big blank spaces in our knowledge, we had to fill in the gaps with our own fabrications.

And those gaps were big. Why did we have to do something that was plainly, clearly and patently wrong by the definitions of society? Why did we have to do some think that put us at risk and upset our families and friends? Why did we have to be outside of the norm?

We used every trick we could find to get answers to those questions. We constructed our own theory of gender, and our own

definition of what was acceptable. It is amazing what the human mind can do when it goes to work. We see what we choose to see, and we all had to do some fancy choosing to be comfortable with what we had to do to express our transgender. There were so many blocks and barriers that we had to stop seeing them, or we would have been incapacitated.

In *The Big Chill*, Jeff Goldblum's character believes that rationalizations are more important than sex. His evidence? "Have you ever gone a week without a rationalization?" I know that no transgendered person ever has. We had to learn to deny the problems and focus on some solution that we hoped would be workable, just to survive. If we couldn't find a way to manage our transgender, the results would be depression and sometimes be fatal.

So we all learned how to build our own worlds. Maybe it was a world to show to others, hiding the secrets we were taught were shameful. Maybe it was a fantasy world where we go to be beautiful, or didn't have pressure, or were the woman of our dreams or whatever. Or maybe it was some other world we built for our survival.

These worlds are precious to us, and fragile. They were the counterweights for our sanity, bubbles of peace in a crazy world. But all of these worlds were based in somewhat outside of reality. We saw things in a unique and different light. We looked better in the mirror, or nobody noticed us in the mall, or there wasn't a hint of problem, or something. We were in, at least a little bit, denial of the truth. We learned to lie, and if we told the lie long enough and loud enough, we began to believe it. It was the only way we could protect our feelings.

Our conceptions were built on our own pillars. And when anyone started to ask questions that questioned the assumptions our world was based on, we got scared. And we fought back, tooth and nail. I'm a heterosexual crossdresser, and as long as I never think about men, I'm OK. I'm a woman, I have always been a woman, so there. I am expressing my femininity, and if you say one thing, I'll pound you out!

"The real reason transsexuals stay away from each other is because we threaten the hell out of each other," says Kate Bornstein in her groundbreaking *Gender Outlaw*. "We call into question the basic assumptions in each other's lives."

One of the primary beliefs in most systems, including, for example, recovery, is that getting to honesty is the only way to effectively deal with the world. This is very difficult for transgendered people, who have been trained to keep secrets, to build pretty, if unreal, faces. We believe that if we tell the truth we will be punished, ostracized, marginalized, even criminalized. This is a very potent fear.

But recovery understands this. It does not require us to tell the whole unvarnished truth to everyone we meet. It is sufficient to tell it to just one person, to learn to tell the truth in a safe space. We can maintain our privacy, while embracing our honesty.

Magic happens as we begin to be truthful. We begin to heal, and we begin to be able to tolerate the truth from others. We spend

our energy getting ourselves in harmony, rather than maintaining a shield of fear. We finally are able to get in touch with who we really are, rather than who we have pretended to be.

When we come naked and honest to the world, dropping the deceits that we thought protected us, a wonderful thing happens. People begin to see us as full and complete humans, and glimpse our inner beauty. They see a whole person, and are able to respond to us that way. The walls of rationalizations we put up to keep out what we fear also keep out love, and dropping the walls lets in love.

We have learned to lie for survival. But survival is never enough. It is crucial that we learn to tell the truth for happiness.

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The Transgenderist Jan 1996

## TGIC In Crisis

Callan Williams Copyright © 1996

It was a rough night. Katherine came in and wanted to talk about Pataki's removal of SRS coverage from Medicaid, and Jennifer talked about the limits to that coverage, including a very limited number of approved doctors and a four year RLT, during which you had to be on Medicare constantly — or the clock would reset. It seems doubtful many operations were paid for at all under those policies.

But then Katherine tore down the sign that said No Smoking 2 & 4th Thursdays, called the policy void, a sham. It wasn't just Joan puffing like a chimney in her corner, ready to give her view of the world to scared new people, it was Winnie lighting up, who was smelling Joan's smoke and feeling the stress.

Katherine walked out. And many followed. Melodie, who had gone outside to smoke, rumbled about the Gestapo, as somehow a democratically agreed on compromise about smoking was about others acting like Nazis.

TGIC is in crisis. It started as a simple social club for TVs to get together, in the home of one of the members, or in a quiet gay bar. It was a shared closet, a place to get affirmation, meet people like you, and do what you couldn't do anywhere else.

But it's 1996. Transgender has taken to the streets, coming out of the closet, following the gay & lesbian liberation movement. We now talk about direct action groups, talking action to make the world a better place — a concept Katherine was discussing when she was forced out by people who wouldn't compromise their own comfort.

To make it in this new world, TGIC needs to change. How does it give a place for the still closeted to feel safe, a place for the newcomer to learn, a place for those who are leaving the closet to find their wings, and a place for those who are working for change to come together? Much as we each need to be reborn, so does TGIC.

TGIC has been working to change itself. The newsletter today reflects much of this energy, keeping people up to date on liberation topics and social events. But the core of the group, the welcoming of others, outreach into the community and events that educate and entertain have not yet been addressed.

Is this someone's fault? No. Winnie became president over five years ago, and has understood her own limits. Her benign leadership has always given others a chance to do what they will with the club. She never claimed she would be a go-getter president, developing a cadre of new leaders, just to be a caretaker, and she has done that admirably. That doesn't mean she doesn't get her share of complaints and headaches that she often doesn't deserve.

When people complain about aspects of the club, her response is simply and logically "If you want it done better, go ahead. This is your club too, and I'll be happy to let you do what you want."

Winnie herself has seen the need for change, for transformation, and has acted on it by trying to resign from the Presidency — with no takers. She looks for new blood, but the club has become stagnant and still, and finding new energy is very difficult. Everyone has other projects, other issues.

Change is possible. The landlord has talked about redoing the club space, maybe even moving to the second floor. The clubroom is available 6 nights a week — a perfect setting for

meetings of a direct action group (Upstate Menace?), a TS continuing workshop, classes or whatever. The G&L Community Center is excited to work on events with us. There is motion.

But what we need to support that motion is a flow of new people, people who are again excited about the opportunity to come to TGIC, who feel welcomed, who have fun and learn something. We must have energy enough to attract and hold people. We can do this in many ways — developing standardized telephone answering and out call procedures to welcome new members, upgrading the welcome information, having an advertised place for a newcomers social, getting a positive and up-beat message out more widely.

The task may seem foreboding. Some have noted seeing the work of others is tough, because they see people setting standards they are afraid they can't meet. Well, everyone can do their part, just as I have done my part in invigorating the newsletter and Thursday nights for many years.

If you want to complain about TGIC, if you see problems at TGIC — or in the world — and you think they should be fixed, I ask you: **If not you, who? If not now, when?**

Life is what happens while we are making other plans. In this moment you can make a change and make TGIC a more welcoming and more active place. We can step away from habits and take charge of our lives, and become more full, and in the process leave the world a little better place than how we found it.

TGIC is in crisis. It needs reinvention. And that won't happen until someone steps up to do the work.

The Transgenderist March 1996



## WHERE HAVE ALL OUR LEADERS GONE?

Cross-Talk #85 Nov 1996

by Kimberleigh Richards  
Publisher & Managing Editor

Every once in a while, someone asks me "whatever happened to ...?" and I find myself having to dig either through the dusty recesses of my mind or the archives of the old Cross-Talk newsletter format issues to find the answer.

**"The number of people who less than ten years ago were the 'movers and shakers' and who still hold that level of esteem today is small."**

The "every once in a while" has been much more frequent of late, though, which gets me thinking about the leaders of earlier years who — once having had name recognition in our community — have faded into the background. And I, like others, have found myself wondering why this is so. Of course, I am in obvious danger of reopening the old "what makes a leader a leader?" debate, which I remember first commenting upon just five years ago, in Cross-Talk #25, in which I argued that one becomes a leader not by proclaiming themselves such, but by their actions (and whether or not anyone follows their lead). But in reading that old editorial, I was reminded of a list of then-leaders I included in it, and I was astonished to realize how many of them are essentially absent from view now. Indeed, of those I mentioned, only a relative handful — Jane Ellen Fairfax, Sheila Kirk, Naomi Owen, Virginia Prince, and JoAnn Roberts — are both still active in the community and visible in its leadership. What happened to the rest? Merissa Sherrill Lynn and Yvonne Cook (Riley), embroiled in the politics that surround IFGE's financial difficulties, are gone from that organization; Lynn is deliberately distancing herself from the community and most observers believe Cook-Riley will need to do so as well.

Eve Burchert, while still active, is a virtual unknown to most. That may be because her role in the community has always been a quiet, behind-the-scenes one, but nevertheless she is essentially a leader known only to other leaders (and occasionally not even then).

Renee Chevalier, Wendi Danielle Pierce, and Janice Van Cleve went on to sex-reassignment surgery and then went

on with their lives. Janice Rupard retired from the community and is rarely heard from. Ellen Summers, sadly, we lost to illness two years ago (just as we lost someone I had not mentioned in my original editorial, Jennifer Richards, within the past year).

Karen Ann Baumgardner and Wendy Parker are both personal friends, but their time for leadership roles has been limited by concerns of the real world — namely, keeping the bills paid.

I have no idea what happened to Bette Lee Johnson ...

And then there are those who either I didn't think to mention back in issue #25 or who came and went in the half-decade since: Jane Kasper Bentley, Sister Mary Elizabeth (Joanna Clark), Tere Frederickson, Cynthia Howard, Glenda Renee Jones, Phaedra Kelly, Betty Ann Lind, Eileen McCleary, Vickie Stone, JoAnn Altman Stringer, and Gloria Wright, all of whom the transgender community hears little or nothing from these days.

There are others, of course, who were here then (but not mentioned in my original remarks) and are still active today: Dina Amberle, Carol Beecroft, Linda Buten, Angela Gardner, Deanna Johns, Alison Laing, Denise Mason — well, you get the idea. Still, the number of people who less than ten years ago were the "movers and shakers" and who still hold that level of esteem today is small. Heck, I've been visibly active in our community for less time ... I won't even be eligible for IFGE's Lifetime Achievement Award until nearly the millennium (not that I'm sure I want one, given that the person for whom it is named — Virginia Prince — seems to be the only leader who didn't fade from view after being awarded it!)

What's really sad is that I would be willing to bet that most people reading this column hadn't thought about many of the names I've mentioned above in two or three years, if not longer.

Why are these names absent from our community, and why are they so absent that they seem erased even from our memories? Is it burnout from having had to lead too long? Frustration with a community that seems so fragmented that true unity seems impossible to achieve? Does our

community place demands on its leaders that makes it difficult for them to continue, so they choose not to?

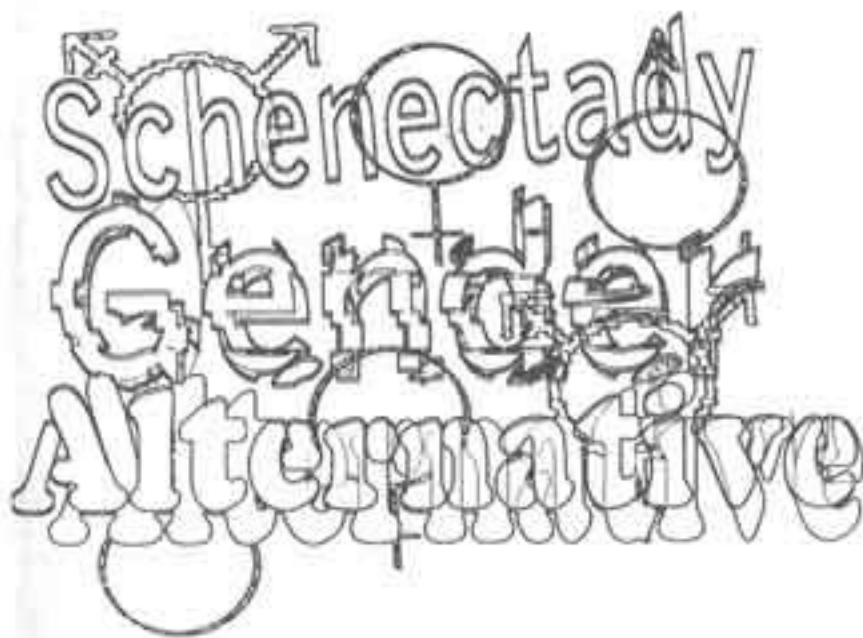
Speaking from experience, I wouldn't be surprised if it was all three. I avoided burnout only by setting a limit on the length of time I served as president of Tri-Ess' Alpha Chapter, by taking a sabbatical from that organization's national board of directors, and by refusing to be nominated for any other organization's board. Anyone who reads these monthly rants of mine know that I frequently find fault with our community's lack of cohesiveness (which is also why one rarely sees me in the transgender areas of the Net these days, either). And one can only be spread so thin before time (and money) gives out; ask the organizers of this year's Holiday En Femme why I had to cancel my already-announced appearance as a luncheon speaker at the last minute.

Sometimes I wonder how I've managed to last this long, and others must ask that question of themselves from time to time. (A few of our subscribers, coping with recent delays in the production and delivery of Cross-Talk, must often wonder if I've stopped managing to last, as well.)

Perhaps rather than asking "where have our leaders gone?" I should be asking why we haven't encouraged our leaders to stay, and develop leaders to succeed them. For those we look to for guidance cannot last in their positions of prominence without the support of those doing the looking.

Ultimately, the very things that have annoyed me about our community are also the reasons our leaders don't, on average, last very long. We squabble amongst ourselves, distancing ourselves from each other in the process, paying only a cost lip service to the diversity which we claim is what pulls us together; we expect our leaders to travel here, there, and everywhere to plead our case, educate the masses, or unify our fragmented cliques, yet we make no attempt to cover their costs in doing so; and when there are problems, we point fingers and refuse to take the blame, leaving our leaders alone to cure problems we've created in the first place.

Who can blame anyone for wanting to exit screaming?



**Schenectady Gender Alternative meets monthly socially at a swank Sch'dy club. For info call 518-863-2783**

**TRANSGENDER CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUES IN THE CAPITOL AREA** by Susan Poe

I want to applaud Hawk Stone's recent contributions to COMMUNITY newspaper on the 60s civil rights movement and transgender rights today. In his May column he talked about the surprising right-wing backlash and failure of Albany County's Proposition B providing civil rights protections for transies, along with the Times Union's anti-trans coverage.

Hawk was not unaware that this was similar to the 60s movement for peace and justice. Enormous forces were brought against Martin Luther King Jr with coordination by the FBI, the mob, wealthy right-wingers and the media. In the mid-60s the popular opinion of him consequently was that he was a violent troublemaker. It was much different then and trans people don't have the same opposition that people of color did then.

One of the differences was that the Black community had more unity and self-identity than much of the trans community has. They saw more commonality with one another and maintained their own communities, businesses and organizations, culture, history, and self-awareness as a people. Civil rights laws only came when it was forced on our society by a beleaguered people. It couldn't be stopped.

Consequently when we have self-proclaimed leaders with no trans constituency demanding laws for our rights, these demands are all couched in how discriminated against and subjected to violence and general sad-sacks we are and it ends up advertising for a back-lash of more discrimination and violence against a scattered and unwitting and unprepared trans community. These leaders are rarely on the ground with us when there are widespread consequences for their political ambitions. This was common in the 60s too.

This kind of backlash doesn't mean it's wrong to push forward thru these kinds of hardships for full recognition as a people in our society. It means the first step is for us to see ourselves that we are a minority population with common experiences and issues and endeavors rather than odd clinical subjects for the medical and psychological experts to study so they can tell us about ourselves. We have to see that we're a part of a minority people and not just some sort of mental health phenomenon. What we need then is to see powerful expressions of self-reliance as a people, doing significant things together and supporting one another. National transgender periodicals have routinely complained of the kind of trans self-hatred, fear, and suspicion that causes us to eat each other up and tear down the most promising leadership and trans initiatives. Locally it has been a stated tradition that transies won't support trans businesses or our endeavors, and

some come forward to take pride that they won't join any l-group or support trans projects or civil rights. That's changing more and more.

Two to five years ago the Capitol area saw a significant trans emergence locally, with a number of new tg groups and organizations, a 501(c)3, trans-run housing referrals with a list of friendly landlords and three buildings housed mostly with transies, medical referrals and outreach, various regular meetings with attendance of a dozen sometimes three or four nights a week, three different newsletters along with the mass circulation Transies In Love, an active trans community center briefly, and the beginning of a cultural and social outflow as transies became active in a couple of churches, at art galleries, neighborhood associations, in peace groups, literary and music events, in Our Own Voices, the NY Civil Liberties Union, Capital District Gay/Lesbian Community Center, The Women's Building, the Ironwood Collective and the Social Justice Center. There were constant programs, speaking engagements and favorable media spotlighting. We had massive new-clothes donations, businesses that wanted to hire transies, and we managed even to visit the sick and remember each others' birthdays.

Things changed quickly. Much of that fell apart. Most people think, well, it just happened. Too bad. For one thing too few transies had to work too hard to make all that happen. Most only want a place to hang out and believe that when things are going good it "just happened" rather than consider who worked hard at it and support the endeavor. Mooches is what they are, and I love them dearly anyway.

In the 60s it's important to understand that there was also divisiveness in the Civil Rights Movement about how to proceed. There wasn't just right-wing racist backlash to consider. There was a Black backlash and self-tokenizing too. Many people of color at the time also considered Dr. Martin Luther King Jr to be a violent troublemaker who would destroy what little rights they had by bringing attention and racist attacks against them. He received many hate letters from Blacks and was occasionally assaulted by Black people, even being stabbed seriously by a Black woman in NYC. This is very similar to what happens to trans initiatives also, and we saw it here in Albany two years ago.

in fact in the last year of his life, when Dr. King came out against the war in Vietnam and promised to join the peace movement and the civil rights movement together and close down the U.S. government until they ended the war and racism, most of the civil rights leaders in the country, like Whitney Young, totally abandoned him.

They believed they should support President Johnson, who was enacting more civil rights legislation than any other president. It was a hardship on Dr. King, it deeply saddened him, but it also made him much more vulnerable

**TIME TO CHOOSE**



-snow white

to the organized campaigns of slander and violence against him. He would have been harder to kill with more support from many of his colleagues who thought he'd gone off the deep end. It's an appropriate lesson for the area transgender community.

As I said before, we saw this self-tokenizing trans-backlash by a small backwards group here in Albany two years ago that greatly minimized transgendered self-reliant community efforts. It was widely reported in TIL and included widespread concerted slander campaigns against dozens of transies, threats of violence, actual vandalism, and published promises and attempts to destroy, at one time or another, every transgender group in the area, along with other trans initiatives and individuals. They proceeded under false pretenses to take over the Transgender Independence Club and kick most members out, lock up and shut down their meeting place of almost 20 years, and leave town after I reported their activities in TIL. Further details can be found in the Capitol Region TG Community History Archives at the Grenander Issues and Policy Archives of SUNY and the back issues of TIL and the TGIC newsletter.

I had to deal with six suicide threats and considerable other personal turmoils from transies whose lives had been seriously affected by this destructive group. And it has invited trouble from outside the trans community when people see transies treating each other so badly. Some of this small secretive group still persist in angry slander against other trans people. Hawk Stone is reknowned for his one-on-one advocacy in the lives of individual trans folk, but what is necessary for a civil rights movement is support for our community's efforts in self-reliance and identity. When frustrated self-tokenizing publicly slander and attack other transies and trans initiatives, our experts stay distant and quiet. This tokenizes and marginalizes us even more.

Why do these experts turn invisible in these kinds of hardships? There's a corollary with the 60s movements. They have their positions to think of. They're comfortable still doing "Gender 101". They earn their living tokenizing themselves, and us, to the GLBT money and publicity test. Having a decimated TG community is okay with them, it makes them a big fish in a little pond. When there's an explosion of trans self-reliance and initiative and involvement in mainstream society these experts don't get as much notice. It's easier to suck dry tiny xenophobic troubled secretive unaccountable little groups of the self-punishing. That's not who trans people are anymore.

When the group of nay-sayers took over and directed TGIC into the dirt two years ago, anonymous contributors active with the Capital District Gay/Lesbian Community Center would help bail them out financially even as we reported their hate campaigns. More than that, in the absence of TIL, this past year due to phenomenal hardships and the serious downsizing of most local trans groups, the initiator of these ongoing hate campaigns, who has accomplished little else but has a PhD, has been rewarded with the Directorship of the Rainbow Access Initiative and a column in CommUNITY, the CDGLCC newspaper. This has galloped dozens, if not hundreds of area transies.

I don't blame the CDGLCC for tokenizing transies, dismissing their needs and lagging behind many mainstream organizations in transgender understanding and acceptance. Transies bother some gay men and lesbians, and transies who have presented themselves to the CDGLCC usually "just want to be accepted" and kiss butt too much, or whine about why gays and lesbians don't do more for transies. This is self-tokenizing. If transies don't present themselves as a unified, dynamic, self-reliant community they're automatically going to be tokenized. Nobody has to do anything for us and especially not if we won't do it for ourselves. The CDGLCC has a few rare transies show up at events or the Rainbow Cafe. It's an inviting friendly place for trans folk. However, the same goes for the Fuller Roadhouse, the Fulton St. Art Gallery, the Cinema Art Theatre in Troy and Tiny's Take-Out in Schenectady. I just don't mean to complain about the CDGLCC for not doing for transies what transies won't do for themselves. It's cool they let us hang out. They like us. Just don't get too uppity.

So I also don't mean to target Hawk Stone with this tirade. He is not guilty of all my complaints in this rant. I applaud

him in his steps. My support is often too critical no doubt. I'm another wary tranny. I think Hawk has personal issues and ambitions that get spread around the community. So do I. Every one of us does and in a demographic as small as ours our personal issues become community issues more easily than we think or want. We need to be responsible about that as individuals and know that all the "wrong" things we criticize other transies for and have personal issues with is a part of their path in becoming what they are emerging into as a whole person reaching for their full potential in life. We all start life very young and do goofy things as we discover who we are and what we can be.

The other part of being embarrassed or outraged by other transies' bad behavior is that we get so embarrassed because we really do identify with them. It's painful to watch others go thru what we went thru, or are going thru. We feel it's a reflection on us as another trans person. We want to deny, and sometimes succeed in forgetting, the stupid things we've done along the way of life. We need to deny that we're like the other bumbler making their ways slowly toward their destiny.

But we are upset with others because we identify with them. As a community, we are bumbling along just like that. Admitting and being responsible for our shortcomings is liberating. There is 'way too much tendency in our milieu to try to cover up and ignore shortcomings, wrongdoing and problems rather than to solve them. The divisiveness, denial, frustration, anger, fear and suspicion that we still often see in the TG community is unnecessary, silly and very hurtful. Our destiny as a people is inevitable and only we can slow it down. To be fully accepting of ourselves first, as much as we are already accepted by most others. Laws won't make that happen. We make that happen.

#### Healthy Relationship Guidelines For Lesbian, Gay Bisexual And Transgendered People Of Color

Relationships between and amongst lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people of color can be profoundly intimate, healing and empowering. However, because the oppression experienced by each of us is so painful to so many areas of our lives, our relationships also have the potential to be tumultuous, abusive and damaging. The following is a list of guidelines to assist us in maintaining healthy relationships and protect us from perpetuating the very oppression we united against in the first place.

#### DO

- ✓ Decide for yourself what your sexual orientation and ethnicity mean to you, or acknowledge that you are still figuring that out and share that with your partner.
- ✓ Discuss with your partner what it means to them to be who they are from the standpoint of both sexual orientation and race.

#### DON'T

- o Allow anyone else to define for you what it means to be who you are. There is more than one way to be a person of color and there are as many ways to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered as there are people.
- o Tell your partner how to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered or judge how they behave as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered person of color.

#### DO

- ✓ Decide for yourself what you want in a partner and how you want to be treated at home and in public. This means deciding whether you want a partner who shares your sexual orientation (or race) or if they can be bisexual, curious, white etc. This also includes deciding how you want to be spoken to and what kind of language is acceptable in joking and serious moments. This also means deciding whether, to whom and to what extent you want to be out as individuals and as a couple.

#### DON'T

- o Criticize your partner for who and how they are. This means no comments or putdowns about them not being out, or being too "butch" or too "ghetto" etc. You can choose whether or not to stay in a relationship with someone however, the choice to put him or her down because of who they are and how they behave is always a bad one.

#### DO

- ✓ Discuss how differences in education, income, age, race, appearance, ability etc. impact your relationship and come up with healthy ways of dealing with differences and power imbalances.

#### DON'T

- o Just close your eyes and hope for the best. The best way to prevent differences from having a negative impact on the relationship is to look honestly at privileges and disadvantages and decide as a couple how to support each other.

#### DO

- ✓ Set aside time to work on the relationship and time to have fun with your partner. It can't be all business and bills or the relationship will lose its spark, but doing some work on the details of the relationship will make the fun part cleaner.
- ✓ Have friends and interests outside the relationship. This will round out your life and provide a valuable resource during difficult times in the relationship. Talk to your partner about your needs regarding time and intimacy with friends and whether or not your romantic partnership is to be an exclusive one.

#### DON'T

- o Try to do it all alone. Seeking counseling is often a good way to have an objective third party with no vested interest give you input on how to improve things.



Thank you  
Silicon Valley Girl  
For all your love  
And support  
For this zine, even  
Though, you  
Distracted me for  
A year with your  
Eyes and wicked  
Beauty, it finally  
Got done-and  
Thanks for the use  
Of your silly ass  
Computer so I  
Could actually make  
Some of it legible.  
This time around  
(I'm sure my readers  
appreciate that)-  
and no, I am never  
giving up my  
typewriters.

Christopher Robin

Mona Shlepenbacher is evil. She drives a custom made retro-rod Ford Deuce with a Chevy 283 and posi-traction, flaming dragons on the doors, emblazoned. Spark plugs are mounted on the ends of the twin exhaust pipes, a dashboard switch connecting them to a "T" Ford spark coil. Gun the engine, cut the ignition, push the spark coil switch, she backfires on command, complete with flames. She removes the catalytic converters after inspection. Mona Shlepenbacher knows wizards, and she herself is a wizardess.

She knows a chemist who spikes her perfume. She has been known to enter a room, walk in a circle doing pirouettes with skirts a swirl, and exit leaving all in that room euphoric, dizzy and giddy.

She gases up at the pump with credit cards stolen by slight of hand from her FBI targets. She does independent FBI field intelligence.

Mona Shlepenbacher is evil.

In her younger days, when she was still a male identifying, cross-dresser on a Halloween kick, she entered a farmhouse in her home neighborhood at midnight, the residents asleep upstairs. She turned on the lights, television, took a 30.06 rifle down off the wall, found a loaded ammo clip, and let off a shot on the front porch. KaPOW!!! It rang and echoed in the night. She put the rifle back in its rack and left hearing the kids upstairs going, "What was that?"

Mona Shlepenbacher is evil.

A year ago, she was approached by a known panhandler suspected of stealing money out of a church sanctuary when it was empty of people with coats and purses untended. She flashed a police badge, grabbed his wrist, and before he could react, he was cinched to a lamppost. She told him a car would come. The badge was a fake.

She's a black belt Karate woman.

One time she found three big serious looking guys slouching on her car. Mona's purse is rigged with mace and that spiked perfume. She swung her purse expertly in their faces. They slowly came back to their senses painfully discovering themselves to be a squirming contorted piece of living modern art, a hand of one body tightly cable tied to the exposed penis of another at the base. The other hand was cable tied to another one's head cinching the mouth. Various feet were creatively cinched. Mona knew these guys. The FBI was notified. They were never again seen in that area.

Dirty Harry is a boy scout compared to Mona.

She teaches self defense to women, and if you get the word from inside people who know this, she'll teach you to drop an assailant dead in three seconds if you want to pay the price.

She's a transgendered Lesbian Amazon.

She's Black, passes for White among the ignorant, beautiful, six feet, two, obviously in the best of physical condition, not on female hormones, and therefore strong as any six foot plus male athlete.

Don't mess with Mona. You may wind up in Saskatchewan with your beard frozen to the ground.

- Tina

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www.nyclu-crc.org

NYCLU has public membership meetings every 2nd Monday of the month at the Albany Public Library.

## Tranny Party

Rex called me Saturday night  
Via cell phone  
On the way to SF  
"wish you were here, bud...."  
And I said,  
"nah...D invited us to his party...."  
Then spent about five minutes  
Talking about what a phony D is  
And how that whole crowd  
Is so preoccupied with the advancement  
Of their gender changes  
never much concern  
For poetry or politics....  
Nothing to talk about,  
In other words....  
But that's really all very fine  
Anyway....  
And then mentioned  
how D's only nice when he's drunk  
Blah blah blah...  
As if I had something to prove!  
Emphasizing the free food  
And "getting Jenny drunk for free"  
As if that was a noble idea  
Never thought of before!  
Then I went to lie in bed  
Awaiting the inevitable  
While the ladies fussed....  
And thought,  
Why the hell am I bothering?  
I read some outsider poetry  
Which made me flinch  
And smile...  
And I thought  
I hate phony people  
I should stay home and write poetry  
About how much I hate them....  
We ended up going to the block  
Where it was supposed to be...  
Couldn't find it  
Couldn't find D at his house  
Or any tranny party anywhere  
Nothing sadder then three well dressed  
Transsexuals on a Saturday night  
Stomping up and down a dark city block  
Wondering where the good time could be hiding  
- Christopher Robin

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