



GIRL TALK

Powder Puffs of California — Serving the California Gender Community Since 1987

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PPOC to Meet in June

There will be June meeting. I haven't been given the details of the meeting. However, it promises to be a good one.

Several "events" are taking place. Please note the Transgender Pride Event on June 18th. Details in the next article.

Also, Tri-Ess' Alpha Chapter is sponsoring *Holiday en Femme* 2000, November 9-12, 2000. You can see Alpha Chapter's brochure on their website by clicking *Holiday en Femme* and also can register there. The Web Site is: <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/village/9977>. See Page 8 for details.

Finally, there is a request for participation in a transsexual research project. See Page 5 for details.

So, it appears that it will be a busy summer. You can kick it off in high gear by coming out to the Placentia Hooliday Inn on Saturday, June 17th.

Date: Sat. May 20, 2000

Time: 8:00 pm PDT

Place: Placentia Holiday Inn, 118 E. Orangethorpe Ave, Placentia, CA. Take 57 Fwy to Orangethorpe exit. Head east.

PPOC Policy Change

Effective with the March 18th meeting, PPOC will no longer be providing a changing room.

Trans-Unity 2000

**A Celebration of Pride For The Transgender Community
Sunday, June 18, 3pm-10pm
FREE**

For more information, call
323-860-7332

A celebration of pride for the transgender community The Village at Ed Gould Plaza 1125 N. McCadden Pl. Hollywood, CA

Ocean of You will be performing original dance and pop songs at Trans-Unity 2000. Ocean of You is multi-ethnic and multi-gender representative. For more information you can visit their web site at www.oceanofyou.homepage.com or you can email them at Oceanofyouinfo@aol.com

A Transgenderist from the Philippines (Asia - lead vocals), a young white man from Mississippi (Dusty - keyboard/guitar), and a young man from Mexico (Gavin - additional keyboard) forms the core of the group Ocean of You. Joined by two Transgenderist sisters doing backup dancing and additional vocals, the group entertained a crowd of over 300.

Trans-Unity 2000 event is a joint presentation by the Gay & Lesbian Center, the Community Prevention Council, the Unique Women's Coalition, the Alcoholism Center for Women, Asian-Pacific AIDS Intervention Team, Minority AIDS Project, Bienestar, Van Ness Recovery House, and is sponsored by Planet Out, one of the community's most popular websites.

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Transgender Identification- The California Driver License

Submitted by Shirley Bushnell

The Transgender Menace Southern California has been working with the Los Angeles Police Department for some time now to improve the sensitivity of the Department regarding transgender issues.

1. Transgender Identification- The California Driver License

Some transgender individuals have reported that LAPD has questioned the validity of the identification that a transgender person presents. Since many transgender persons may be in the process of changing their identification, or presenting identification that is different from the way they currently appear, it is important that the identification presented to law enforcement not be questioned. The LAPD realized that officers may not know that transgender individuals can get their identification changed to reflect a new name and gender, and that this procedure was authorized by the Department of Motor Vehicles of California.

The LAPD is in the process of producing a "Code 20" video on "The Drivers License". This video is from the Continuing Education Division of the LAPD and will be shown during roll call of the officers. [roll call- every shift of LAPD starts with a roll call or briefing]. The LAPD provided an opportunity for members of the transgender community to comment on the script in regards to transgender sensitivity. Even though a very short period of time was given; members of the transgender community responded to the action alert for input.

The Training Video has a section dealing with transgender issues and says that a person's gender and name may be changed. The video then goes on to

outline that this can be done by the DMV Form 328, and says that such license's should be accepted as valid.

The part of the video script dealing with the types of valid license's presented to an officer was recommended to be changed. The following is the recommended change:

OFFICER (V.O.)

Each of these examples can be the person's valid license.

- ▶ Officers may be handed a license with a woman's picture, a man's name and "M" under sex or presented a license with a woman's picture and name, but the sex is marked "M".
- ▶ Officers may also be handed a license with a man's picture, a man's name and "F" under sex. An officer may also be handed a license with a man's picture and name with the sex "M", but the individual presenting the license may appear as a woman.

With this LAPD Training Video the Transgender Menace of Southern California has tried to make Southern California a safer place for us transfolks. For further information contact:

Shirley@earthlink.net

ZeroboyJH@aol.com

Fantasia Fair; October 15 - 22, 2000; Provincetown, Cape Cod, MA. 26th year of providing a Safe Harbor and Welcoming Town for the Freedom of Gender Expression. Dinners, Parties, Dozen of Great Seminars Lunch every day with speakers, Follies, Fashion Show, Grand Banquet, charming accommodations and more. Write for information: Fantasia Fair, PO Box 354, Dep Ical, Sagamore, MA 02561 - 0354; www.fantasiafair.org

THE BOLDER HOLDER

From the Internet

Something for the crossdressers who has everything? -Cyndi

Whilst men may spend a lot of time thinking about them, bras have never really demonstrated much thought capacity of their own. Australian scientists though tell us that the next generation of breast support will be different. They are developing a 'smart bra' that will sense its wearer's actions and adjust its support properties accordingly. The garment will be a god send for sportswomen, preventing the pain and injury caused by excessive breast movement.

The bra will be constructed from intelligent polymer fabrics that can alter their elasticity in response to information about how much strain they are under. The smart bra will thus be able to instantly tighten and loosen its straps or stiffen its cups when it detects excess movement.

The initial phase of the University of Wollongong's smart bra engineering effort will involve measuring the physics of breast travel during exercise. With these parameters established, the designers will then know how much leeway the new undergarment will require.

Big Problem

The problem of upper-body discomfort is experienced by the vast majority of adult females engaging in some form of exercise. The pain is caused by the extreme stresses that the skin, ligaments and other breast tissues are forced to endure as the body makes sudden movements and accelerations. The issue doesn't just affect larger-breasted women, though they tend to suffer more. There are very few well-endowed women at the top level of any physically-active sport.

After a time, permanent stretching and even damage to the mammary structures can occur. In extreme cases, women have had their collarbones broken by the sudden movement of excessively heavy breasts.

The exact, long-term effects of extreme breast movement have not been investigated. One thing is clear though: many women give up sport all together purely because of the pain it causes them. According to doctoral candidate Kelly-Ann Bowles, who is implementing the biomechanical side of the project, this lack of exercise has consequences that are certainly better documented and of more concern than just sore skin.

To date, the most effective answer has been for female athletes to wear purpose-designed sports bras. These garments are usually tighter and firmer than ordinary bras and provide more support. For some women though, sports bras still don't seem to help, and wearing a badly fitting example is next to useless. Others don't like using sports bras because they find the

feeling of greater restraint uncomfortable when they're not exercising or else they become too warm.

The Smart Bra will address both the comfort and support issues. The idea is that the bra can be worn long-term and be quite unrestrictive. When, however, the wearer starts to exercise, the bra will 'know' this from detecting excess breast movement. It will then start to contract and stiffen to a point where it is providing the necessary degree of hold.

Forefront of Design

The preliminary work on sensing breast movements is happening now and should be complete in about 18 months. The calculations are being made by Bowles (sometimes described as a 'breast bounce expert'), under the supervision of Dr Julie Steele from the University of Wollongong's Biomechanics Research Laboratory. Polymer sensors fitted to conventional bras worn by a model will relay data about fabric loading and breathing cycles to a computer via a telemetry system. The information gathered by Bowles will form the basis for the bra's behavior.

The fabric side of things is being taken care of by the university's Intelligent Polymer Research Institute (IPRI). Working in collaboration with the University of Pisa, IPRI has gained much expertise in polymer fabric sensing and actuating applications. Director of IPRI, Professor Gordon Wallace, said that the Smart Bra would be a groundbreaking piece of apparel.

"It will be the first time intelligent polymer systems have been completely integrated into fabric structure," he said.

The system works on a stimulus-response communication between two different polymer coatings. In the case of the bra, the sensor coating (already in existence) will identify when the fabric is exceeding its designated strain limit. It then communicates with the actuator coating, which responds by contracting, thus making the garment tighter and more rigid.

It's intended that the communication between the two coats will ultimately be purely chemical, involving no power source or controlling chip.

Self-adjusting polymers represent the vanguard of fabric research, with countless institutions around the world striving to perfect the technology. Besides bras, other applications include support bandages, prosthetics and clothing capable of monitoring its wearer's health.

Depending on funding, the University of Wollongong expects the smart bra prototypes to be going through their paces in about two years.

Related links:

University of Wollongong

Berlei: world's leading bra manufacturer www.berlei.com

Switching Sexes New Study Questions 'Sex Reassignment' Practice

A new study has called into question the practice of sex reassignment for boys born without penises, giving more weight to the argument that sex roles are determined before birth.

By Seth Hettena

The Associated Press, May 15, 2000

Baltimore

The practice of surgically "reassigning" boys born without penises is being called into question by a new study that suggests gender identity is determined in the womb. Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Hospital on Friday said the study found that such boys, raised as girls, had masculine behavior and most declared themselves to be boys. In what is believed to be the first study of its kind, researchers tracked the development of 27 children born without a penis, a rare defect known as a cloacal exstrophy. The infants were otherwise male with normal testicles, male genes and hormones. Twenty-five of the children were sex reassigned, meaning doctors castrated them at birth and their parents raised them as girls.

Boys Will Be Boys

But over the years, all of the children, currently aged 5-16, exhibited the rough-and-tumble play of boys. Fourteen declared themselves to be boys, in one case as early as age 5, said Dr. William G. Reiner, a child and adolescent psychiatrist and urologist at the Hopkins Children's Center. "These studies indicate that with time and age, children may well know what their gender is, regardless of any and all information and child-rearing to the contrary," he said. "They seem to be quite capable of telling us who they are." The two children who were not reassigned and were raised as boys fit in well with their normal male peers and were better adjusted psychologically than the reassigned children, Reiner said. He called for a thorough review of the practice of sex reassignment of children. The study was presented Friday at the Lawson Wilkins Pediatric Endocrine Society Meeting in Boston. The results contradicted a Canadian study published in the journal *Pediatrics* in 1998 that suggested gender identity develops after birth. In that study, researchers found that a boy who was raised as a girl after his penis was mutilated during circumcision continued to live as a woman.

Profound Implications

"This has very profound implications for the development of gender identity," said Michael Bailey, an associate professor of psychology at Northwestern University who studies gender

identity and sexual orientation. "This suggests that hormones' effect on the brain has a major impact on gender identity." Dr. Marianne J. Legato, a Columbia University professor of clinical medicine who studies the differences between men and women, said sexual differentiation occurs in the first trimester of pregnancy. "When the brain has been masculinized by exposure to testosterone, it is kind of useless to say to this individual, 'You're a girl,'" she said. "It is this impact of testosterone that gives males the feelings that they are men."

The Mulch Pile Ministry - Seeing With Your Heart

By Rachel Miller

Addressing the spiritual issues of those who feel excluded from the church because they are different in some way seemed an ultra-clear direction for me. It presented an opportunity to use my experiences as a cross-dresser to benefit others who have been disenfranchised for any number of reasons. Yet after penning the initial article, my ideas froze in mid-thought. I found myself embarked on a major new journey with no story line. Had I taken the wrong trail? Eventually it became apparent that it was the right trail, but I was missing the backpack containing everything I needed for the trip!

I had become comfortable by Emailing intellectual tidbits from the safety of my computer. I wasn't experiencing anything new. Whatever value my book and articles have had, has come from recounting what I have learned by actually doing something. While I had corresponded with my pastor about a ministry, I had failed to make a personal commitment to take any specific action.

That condition changed a few weeks ago when I proposed launching what I called the "Mulch Pile Ministry" at our church. Its focus is on creating loving relationships based on truth. The following is a lightly edited version of the letter I sent to my pastor. Since writing it I feel that I'm finally back on the right path and expect that these articles will follow the trail of my actual footsteps. Hopefully others will see value in them and widen the trail into a well-traveled route providing spiritual relief to many in desperate need. I hope you'll decide to pack your bags and make a similar trip.

Best wishes,

Rachel

+++++

I am proposing the creation of a new ministry to help meet our purpose of leading people into a personal and growing

Please see RACHEL, Page 7

Help Needed -- Transgender Finger Length Project

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE Transgender Finger Length Research Project

Men and women have different finger length patterns. While overall finger length relates to one's postnatal hormonal environment, the relative lengths of the index and ring fingers is determined by one's exposure to testosterone during fetal development. Researchers have long thought that sexual orientation and gender identity relate to prenatal testosterone exposure.

Recently, Terrance Williams et al. (Breedlove lab, UC Berkeley) published their findings that lesbian women have male-like finger length ratios, suggesting lesbianism is associated with prenatal testosterone exposure. While the data were too weak to be conclusive regarding gay men, they showed evidence that each successive male birth is associated with higher prenatal testosterone exposure. It is now well known that male homosexuality occurs more frequently in men with two or more older brothers born to the same mother. The Williams et al. (2000) findings are good evidence, at least for lesbianism, that sexual orientation is biologically determined during fetal development. Their paper was considered quite important and was published in one of the oldest and most prestigious scientific publications, *Nature*.

Williams et al. (2000) did not look at the finger lengths of transgendered individuals in their study, for lack of access to the transgender community. Dr. Sarah Fox, a neurobiologist and transsexual woman, is conducting a similar study to determine whether there is evidence of prenatal testosterone exposure in female-to-male transsexuals and of a prenatal testosterone deficit in male-to-female transsexuals. These findings would be largely consistent with prevailing theory but would be the first experimental evidence of any prenatal biological factor underlying transsexualism.

Because the finger length differences are small and subtle, large numbers of subjects are needed in order to tease out population differences. Based on the Williams et al. findings, Dr. Fox estimates that she will need data from approximately 120 male-to-female and 120 female-to-male transsexuals. She therefore needs the help of transgender leaders throughout the country. She has already been promised access to Dr. Marc Breedlove's control data from nontransgendered, heterosexual men and women.

If you are associated with any transsexual group, Dr. Fox invites your participation in her study. She has set up the following web page with instructions as to how small groups can participate:

<http://www.iwaynet.net/~sarahfox/finger1.htm>

Participants will need to fill out a short questionnaire and have their hands photocopied. Dr. Fox will then take measurements from the photocopies.

The success of this project depends on the willingness of transsexuals to participate in the study. All individual information will be kept confidential, as per the ethical guidelines established by the American Psychological Association. Results will be published in a peer-reviewed scientific publication such as *Nature*.

Although Dr. Fox has not yet been able to collect much data, her data appear promising, exhibiting the expected trends. In fact she reports one finding that already indicates a biological factor of unknown causational relation to transsexualism.

===== FAQs: =====

Can I participate in this study if I am not part of a group of transsexuals?

No. Dr. Fox is concerned that data accepted from individuals may not be reliable. Her fear is that some transsexual women and men may try to "help" her study by sending in photocopies of genetic female and genetic male hands, respectively. Collection of data in group settings will establish some level of accountability.

=====
Is Dr. Fox also collecting data on crossdressers and other transgender groups?

No, not currently. There are very good theoretical reasons to suspect biological factors underlying transsexualism; however, there is considerably less reason to suspect similar biological determinants for crossdressing. For this reason, Dr. Fox's initial efforts will focus on transsexualism. If the study is later expanded to crossdressers, Dr. Fox will collect those data herself at one of the national conferences.

=====
Why is it important for Dr. Fox to do this study?

Establishment of a biological basis for transsexualism is important for the transgender civil rights movement. Why? It is important for us to show that transsexualism (and hopefully by inference, transgenderism) is immutable and is not a choice we make to follow some "alternative lifestyle." The importance of this concept is quite evident from a quote by Assemblyman Keeley, Speaker pro-tempore of the California Assembly, with regard to a bill currently in the California legislature that would add gender expression to the state's antidiscrimination laws:

Please see FINGER, Page 7

Transsexual toilet costs T \$8G

By Laura Brown Boston Herald, Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Still struggling to boost its image as a sensitive employer, the MBTA recently built a third bathroom at a Green Line maintenance facility to accommodate a transsexual employee.

The \$8,000 renovation of a former porter's closet at the T's Reservoir carhouse in January created a separate shower stall, toilet and sink for the transsexual worker, T officials said, but any other employee who needs privacy also can use the space.

"(The renovation) was done because it's important to ensure a comfortable and stress-free workplace for all employees and we felt the best course of action was to provide a third restroom," said MBTA spokesman Joe Pesaturo.

The transsexual T repair worker is mid-way through a long process of changing gender from male to female and found herself in an uncomfortable situation with her co-workers in the existing bathrooms at the carhouse, sources said.

The bathrooms double as shower facilities for the 35 workers at the Cleveland Circle repair yard.

After employee complaints against the T mounted rapidly in the mid-1990s, the state Attorney General's office blasted the authority's diversity efforts, charging the MBTA did little to stop sexual and racial discrimination and harassment.

The AG forced MBTA officials and the transit authority's unions to sign an agreement promising to improve training, revamp the internal complaint process and change its hiring and promotion practices.

The attorney general recently noted that the authority has not yet met all the terms of the original deal, but T officials insist they have come a long way and are still making gains.

The Reservoir bathroom issue placed the MBTA at the center of a nationwide employer dilemma about dealing with workers who transition from one gender to another.

Few companies have specific policies about how to deal with transsexuals who choose to make a transition in the workplace.

Current medical standards of care require that people undergoing a gender change live in the identity of the new gender for at least a year before the final surgery is allowed that will complete the change, said Sara Herwig, director of operations for the International Foundation for Gender Equity in Waltham.

Herwig stressed that she was unfamiliar with any of the details of the MBTA situation, but said "the bathroom issue" is the most common problem for employers who are dealing with workers making a gender transition.

"The person who's transitioning is absolutely stuck in the middle with no place to go," she said. "Some companies don't understand that."

The process may take years as the transsexual saves to pay for treatment and surgery that is rarely covered by health insurance, she added.

Janis Walworth, director of the Los Angeles-based Center for Gender Equity, advises companies and conducts training on how to develop sensitive policies for dealing with transsexuals in the workplace.

In spite of federal regulations that require employers to provide restrooms for their workers, some companies have told transsexual employees they have to use a bathroom off the premises, she said.

The issue is more difficult in the workplace because co-workers have known the transsexual in both sexual identities, Walworth added.

"Living in a between state is difficult for everybody," she said. The Herald is withholding the name of the transsexual T worker and could not reach her for comment.

The T's Pesaturo said T officials felt they had to make a "reasonable accommodation" - required under the law - to resolve the situation.

"We want to make it clear that anyone who works at Reservoir can use this bathroom," he added. "A unisex bathroom gives an employee a level of privacy that is not available in the other employee bathrooms."

Federal judge grants trial to inmate seeking a sex change

Associated Press, Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Robert Kosilek, serving a life sentence for killing his wife, has been granted a new trial, this time to see whether he gets to live the rest of his life as a woman.

Kosilek, who calls himself Michelle, claims he has a serious medical condition called gender identity disorder, and the state Department of Corrections is violating his civil rights by depriving him of necessary treatment, including a sex change.

A psychologist hired by the department at the court's request concluded that if Kosilek, 51, is not allowed to become a woman, he "would be at great risk for self-harm, perhaps mutilation, if not suicide."

"She has been preoccupied with the desire to surgically remove all male genitalia, and has used female hormones in the past and desires them to correct what he believes to be an accident of nature," Dr. Marshal Forstein, who had a 75-minute interview with Kosilek in March, said in his report to the court.

In his report, Forstein recommended a sex-change operation for Kosilek, surgical feminization of facial features, female hormone treatments, ongoing psychotherapy, and access to makeup, hair materials, nail polish and other items.

Richard McFarland of the Department of Corrections said Forstein's report didn't take into account "the significant safety and security concerns with regard to ... a female within the general population of a male prison."

Tuesday in Boston, U.S. District Judge Mark L. Wolf granted the trial, to be held in the fall.

Wolf said the non-jury trial will decide "what is the plaintiff's condition, and what is necessary to treat that adequately in the prison setting."

Kosilek was convicted of using wire to strangle his wife, Cheryl, 35, in their Mansfield home May 20, 1990, and dumping her body in her car at the Emerald Square Mall in North Attleboro.

He was convicted in 1993, and is being held at MCI Norfolk.

RACHEL*Continued from Page 4*

relationship with Jesus Christ through our value of authentic community; i.e. encouraging people to develop loving relationships based on truth.

I spent most of my life wrestling with the issue of cross-dressing yet felt that the church was the very last place to seek help. Rather than an outflow of God's love and acceptance, I had found judgment and condemnation. The projection of that attitude tended to keep me away from church and became a barrier to a loving, intimate relationship with my Creator.

Unfortunately many people, carrying all types of burdens, share a similar experience. Even though the Gospels proclaim the Good News of God's unconditional love, many continue to feel excluded and believe that the church does not help those who are outside the normal boundaries. Many have found help elsewhere but it is devoid of any significant spiritual foundation.

At our Inquirer's class (a class for people considering joining the church) you said that the essence of the church is to make it big enough to let everybody in. Ever since, I have heard continual messages of love and inclusion from you and the rest of the staff. One paragraph from your book struck a chord deep within me -- "There is nothing that provides more freedom and security than knowing that someone has honestly seen you without your protective walls and still loves you. A deeper, richer relationship can blossom from persevering in the mulch pile of real life." It made me realize that if the church provided that sort of truthful, loving environment, we could find God's lasting answers rather than the superficial answers of the secular world.

My proposal is to start a Mulch Pile Ministry where those who have lived or are living in the "avoidable world" (in a recent sermon he talked about how we avoid people who make us uncomfortable because they are different) you recently described, can come together to practice God's love for each other without our customary protective walls. The song Let the Walls Fall Down was introduced at my first Sunday service and would be a great theme song for this ministry.

I have lived this life of shame, guilt and pain and shed tears of compassion for others that are still suffering. My writing and speaking in the transgendered community (also the educational and medical communities) has focused on helping others. Telling my secret freed me from its bondage and making myself vulnerable encouraged others to share their burden with someone they could trust. I want to tell my story as a way to start this ministry and to help others find God's yoke of peace.

I believe that this is my spiritual home and that working in this area is my spiritual gift. I have the passion and commitment to stay the course. I am anxious to work with you and other members of the church to implement this idea so please let me know how to proceed.

Notes:

If you want to achieve a better understanding of the issues faced by cross-dressers (transvestites) and other transgendered people, my book and transgendered web site will help. Planting Loving Seeds contains a copy of this article, other spiritually-oriented articles and the complete materials from a spiritual seminar for transgendered people.

FINGER*Continued from Page 5*

"I'm carrying 2142 because I believe that when decisions are made about employment and housing, they should be decisions that are not based on discrimination; they are not based on immutable characteristics that a person has, which is to say whether they are a man or woman, African-American or Asian American, young or old. We've made a decision in this country that we will not discriminate based on these immutable characteristics."

The most immediate impact of a strong scientific defense of biological determinism would be to nullify a clause in the Americans with Disabilities Act, which excludes transgenderism not of a biological cause. The more significant and longer-range impact would be to nullify the "choice" argument that is so commonly wielded against us, thus opening doors for us, putting us on the same conceptual plane as racial minorities.

How can I contact Dr. Fox with other questions?

Her email address is sarah@gendernet.org

PPOC: A Renaissance Chapter

For more information on Renaissance:

RENAISSANCE

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Email: tcn@ren.org

WWW: <http://www.ren.org>

AOL Keyword: Renaissance

Tri-Ess Holiday en Femme 2000

Millennial Spectacular

November 9 - 12, 2000

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