

TRANSgenderist

Monthly Magazine of the Transgender Independence Club

October, 1998

Life is Interesting

Hello all. We have a lot of material in here, so let's get right to it. First and foremost is the TGIC Halloween Party, and I've enclosed some Q&A about that, as well as the official flier. Feel free to copy it and distribute it. I understand there will be a changed ad in Metroland as well (thanks, Karen!).

Callan's article on "Whither TGIC?" elicited a lot of responses, which are also given. Monica Mistral is willing to put up a TGIC website on GeoCities, and that means it is time to give up the two-column format I have been using and get more aggressive about making this magazine web-ready. So this is the last magazine in this format; next month it WILL be different.

The "webbing" of TGIC may bring profound changes. Yvonne and Monica report their sites have gotten a total of 400,000 hits, and that is a major commentary on how the TG community on the web has grown and become a force.

TGs are popping up all over. From the New Zealand veterinarian to the concert pianist Sara (David) Buechner and to two politicians in Germany and Peru, we still make news. CA signed a bill to protect TGs from hate crimes.

A wonderful description of the Thursday Irregulars is begun, topped off by more silliness, and that's an issue. Because of the strict deadlines and the fact I can't receive attachments here, Vanessa will be returning in November, and I am also proposing Callan's reporting on the Teen Suicide problem, the Presidential Peccadillos quiz, an article about the hypocrisy of churches towards TGs and a description of the very closeted TG priests of the Church of England. And, of course, more irregulars.

Huggles,

*- Via the
Real Vicky [redacted]
HJ*

Personal Notice

"Will the Chuck from down the Hudson please return the wig? It is my best one, and I do need it. Thanks. Joe [redacted]"

Joan [redacted] 1930-1998

We are sorry to report that Joan, a former TGIC member, died on August 16. Joan was among the earliest members of TVIC, the forerunner of TGIC, and was also active in the group called "TV Entertainers." She served for several years as vice-president of TGIC, where she answered the phone during our meetings and organized monthly dinner parties for a while.

Fran responds to "Whither TGIC"

Dear Callan, As usual, your article was very well done. As I read it my conscience and heart was pricked a bit, I admit. "Whither TGIC?" I don't know, but it does seem that times have changed and perhaps, as you indicated, the needs of TG people have changed.

I too find it sad if the doors of TGIC close forever and I do not have the investment in it that so many others have. The years of work and "hanging in there"! I believe if you had ten minutes alone with each person who used to attend, or attends now and then, each of us would have good reasons why we no longer walk up those steep narrow steps to the third floor.

My friend in Palm Beach, Rhonda [redacted], managed to start a new group there two years ago and I believe it is still growing. Their model is different. It operates as a true "Support Group". Someone facilitates and most participate. The nights my love and I attended we found the group "sharing" around about their week or some new experience, or what their

week was like. It was a non-judgemental atmosphere and most seemed to feel good after just expressing them self briefly. When the one hour or so was over,... a restaurant (which included a bar) was chosen and the group of ten or so adjoined to that place. They then sat around and chatted for another two hours or so. Now I realize that Palm Beach has many more heads to draw from and perhaps that is why it seems to work for them. Perhaps it was that some kind of program was the norm,... even if only the one hour structured and organized sharing. I will drop an E-Mail to Rhonda and question how it is going today which is almost a year since we attended. I am curious to see if the attendance has held up or, if they are going the way of so many other TG Groups.

As for me, I cannot clearly tell you why I seem to have dropped off. I know the last year I did come in, I did it principally for "Others",... to be there to chat or support the newcomers, etc. I did not "NEED" to come in for myself. On reflecting on that I guess it is as you touched on in your note,... I can get dressed and go to dinner at the Charlton House anytime I want,... or to a movie in Pittsfield, MA or a weekend in Cape Cod. But saying that, I realize not everyone can do that which leads me to believe we still need TGIC.

I am attempting to re-arrange my schedule so the night of the Halloween Party is free for me and if so I will contact you to help and pitch in,... I can do posters even if I cannot come so please let me know.

I am grateful for you, Winnie, and the others who have kept up CPR on TGIC. With good wishes, Fran [REDACTED]

Two Kentucky men tried to pull the front off a cash machine by running a chain from the machine to the bumper of their pickup truck. Instead, they pulled the bumper off the truck. They panicked, fled & left the chain still attached to the machine & their bumper (license plate still attached).

SECRET:

Something you tell to one person at a time.

Monnica Responds to "Whither TGIC?"

Hi: Umm. I would like to participate and help more, but like others, probably, dont know how or on what. I have never been a 'regular' to the meetings, I've hardly been to a few. Still, I would never want to see TGIC disappear. I havent been an active part of TGIC, but it would be a big difference to me if TGIC wasnt there. To me it represents an opportunity. I like the thought that it is there in case I need it. And I do need it, I just dont have the time/ chance/ opportunity/ easyness/ courage/ option/ ocaasion/ convienience/ freedom/ etc./ to be there, to make it to the meetings, etc. I always say and think it will change. Maybe I think 'once I participate more, maybe I can help more'. Which makes sense. But what about 'If I help more, maybe I'll participate more.' It could work, I dont know. But how can I help, I still dont know.

Ok, so there is three areas of activity: outreach, programming, and operations. For outreach...newsletter. Mmm, no. I cant write, I dont even know english, I just pretend I do. I cant do much with the rest, except maybe the TGIC website. Im sure many of you know how to make a homepage, but why dont we have one yet? Or do we, and I just dont know. If not, I'd be glad to help. If more and more of *us* are leaning towards the internet for help/support/info/friends, why not use the internet to draw more of *us* into TGIC? It wouldnt cost us a thing. We can put it up on Geocities in a short lapse of time and maintain it ourselves. It could draw a good inflow of girls. So...? For Programming... Im not the best at this, but I could help someone do it. I dont know about everybody else, but I would like a lot to have monthly dinners, parties, joint events with other groups, trips, etc. The monthly newcomer's night with introductions is a good idea too, as is the big sister program.

For Operations...this is probably the one i least know how to help...

But anyways, maybe many of us 'would like' to help, but feel we cant, for whatever reasons.

Maybe doing something by ourselves is not too convinient. I thank and admire everybody who is doing something to keep TGIC alive at this moment.

The idea I would give, is to have commitees, or something like that. As we mentioned, some structured meetings might be good, it mought not I dont know. I think working in groups of 3 would be good/cool. By yourself, too hard/too alone. Two of us, its either one or the other. With three, its good. If one cant or is not available to help, theres still two to work things out. Again, I dont know. And dont ask me what I do know :)

So, I just rambled a little. "Monnica" has not been around much this year, but I plan on being around more for whats left of the year. I spent some \$ on a new wig and a new dress, kind of to force myself out. :) "A wig/dress is a terrible thing to waste." You can quote me on that one. Just kidding. Enough I guess. Comments/responses are welcome, as long as you keep them to yourself. Haha, just kidding again, and it was even a little funny :)

Have a good night... Monnica

* * * * *

Vix! Hi, I'll get/find the time to work on it, if you and others throw some ideas for content. Also, I'll expect somebody else to jump in and help me, but meanwhile I'll start it up. Not this week, but promptly enough. Geocities WestHollywood Heights sound like the right place, we can do that... So yeah...lets talk :) ... Monnica

Yvonne Responds

Hi folks, Callan's e-mail is a much needed wake up call to all of us. The idea that transgender and crossdressing support groups may have outlived their usefulness is one that is being expressed quite a bit these days, and not just here in our region. I know of one survey that indicates that, among crossdressers, only one out five belong to some kind of TG support group, and two out of five have attended a meeting at least once. This would mean that half the people who make the effort to get to a

meeting don't join.

I guess I identify more with Fran in that I'm reasonably comfortable engaging in a wide variety of activities crossdressed, either alone, with friends or with my partner. I don't *need* a place to go.

But it wasn't that long ago, only four years, that I still felt like I was the only person in the world who crossdressed. In fact, the first time I spoke to another person like myself was when I called the TGIC clubhouse on a Thursday night and spoke to Joan. I gave Joan my phone number and asked her to pass it on to anyone in the group who would have some time to give me a call and talk. Just talk. Joan was kind enough to give me her phone number and a few days later I did call her and we talked.

And so began my personal journey of self-acceptance. A journey that others have, from time to time, shared with me. First and foremost is my partner Lori, who is there for me always. And of course Denise, who was my mentor and "big sister", if you will, and helped me become more comfortable being out in public because she was so damn good at it.

I don't have the kind of experience Fran has with other organizations, both local and national, and I think we in the Capital District are fortunate to have among us a member who does have this sort of exposure. Coupled with her own level of self-acceptance, her gentle demeanor and kind disposition, we have, if you pardon the expression, a valuable resource available to us in Fran.

I have also been to meetings where a true support session is held, and I found these to be very useful as a way to bind the members together. TGIC and Lambda Chi seem to have evolved into more of a social club than a support/resource organization. This has been good for the long-time members but tough on new comers. Acceptance into the group is more a question of personal acceptance (we accept people we like, and reject people we don't like). Imagine if the Damien Center in Troy, or the Comittee to Prevent Child Abuse in Albany worked on that principle. Or the Red Cross for

that matter.

It has been my experience (and not just with TG groups) that any group that forms around a narrow definition of who and what its members are needs to stay tightly focused on those issues. When meetings have an agenda for the evening, then even the new comers get a chance to stand out and participate. Going to a TGIC or LCL meeting for the first time can be, for some, like going to party where you don't know anyone. Not everyone is a social butterfly. But everyone has something to offer. Especially people who have lived with personal gender issues most of their lives.

For the past year or so, I have been making e-mail contact on some kind of regular basis with 8 or 9 crossdressers in the Capital Region, trying to encourage them to come to a Lambda Chi meeting. Mind you, these are people who contacted me first through my web site! Their reluctance is phenomenal. It makes me wonder how many more people still live in isolation. At this point, if I could encourage just one of these people to attend a meeting, I'd feel like I accomplished something. I know I can't make anyone do anything they're not ready to do.

I have no doubt that for someone who is still very much alone and in the closet, groups like TGIC and LCL are essential. If the "I" in TGIC stands for independence, then clearly TGIC works, and works well, if the people I have met are any indication.

While I agree with Callan that constant vigilance is needed, I think her article/e-mail had a serious omission: namely, the things that *have* been accomplished. I only hang around on the perimeter, but even from my poor vantage point, I noticed some things.

1) Although I don't actually get the newsletter, Vickie seems to be getting the job done fairly regularly. If a newsletter is getting mailed out even 6 times a year, then Vickie has provided a valuable service to the community, by enabling people to keep in touch. There are probably a few folks out there who would like to come to meetings but just don't have the time. They probably get a lot of pleasure from the

newsletter.

2) Last January, a group of us got together for a panel discussion on transgenderism in Saratoga as part of a film festival. The event was organized by the Saratoga Wellness Alliance. It was, for them, a large turnout and the audience was so responsive that we literally had to be thrown out. Obviously the level of discourse was well above the Jerry Springer show. The e-mail I received was signed by "Lor". I don't know who this is, but any opportunity we have to meet the public can only advance our cause.

3) Denise quietly organizes a monthly dinner outing around the LCL meetings. These are always a lot of fun.

4) Edie (Ed) started up Albany Stocks and Bonds, which, while not everyone's cup of tea, has added a new "dimension" to things around here. A few TGIC members have been to ASB parties. And a few more, I am told, would like to but are, ahem, shy! How much longer are you gonna let that rubber dress and five inch pumps gather dust in the closet.

5) Myself and Monica both have web sites that have been up and running for almost three years now, so the Capital District has a presence on the World Wide Web. The two sites combined have been visited almost 400,000 times.

6) There was a Halloween party last year, and I heard it was great.

Like I said, this is just what I am aware of from way out here. I am sure this list should be longer, and I apologize to anyone who may feel slighted. That was not my intention. Truth is, I probably need to get out more.

So things do happen. Maybe not at warp factor 10, but Albany is not a warp factor 10 kinda place. And never will be. That's one of the reasons I chose to stay here after college rather than move back to New York City.

Maybe next year at this time, this list will be a little longer. --Yvonne

<http://www.albany.net/~yms/>

TGIC Halloween

Date: Wed, 03 Jun 1998 19:16:34 PDT

The Daily Gazette, June 2, 1998
Schenectady, NY
(<http://www.dailygazette.com>)

By TERESA NOVELLINO,
Gazette Reporter

ALBANY - After voting to tighten city laws that protect gay people from housing and employment discrimination, the Common Council passed a resolution Monday urging state lawmakers to pass a law that similarly protects gays. The city already has a human rights ordinance, adopted in 1991, that prohibits discrimination against gays along with other groups. But two separate ordinances that prohibit employment and housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability and marital status do not mention sexual orientation. Legislation proposed by 6th Ward Alderman Richard Conti - which unanimously passed Monday night - adds "sexual orientation" to the list on those two ordinances, basically closing the loophole in the city's ordinances. "These two existing ordinances were never amended to add the sexual orientation," Conti said. "These two ordinances bring those respective areas of code into compliance."

The state Assembly passed a bill in 1993, but the Senate did not. In each subsequent year, it has also been held up by the Senate, Healy said.

Other municipalities that have ordinances protecting gays include Albany County, Rochester, Buffalo, New York City, Alfred, Ithaca, Watertown and Plattsburgh, Conti said.

How come you press harder on a remote-control when you know the battery is dead? Why are they called apartments, when they are stuck together? The light went out, but where to?

And don't forget the poster, which has the rest of the information!

The TGIC Halloween Party has been scheduled for Saturday October 24 at Joe's Yours Jazz Club in Schenectady. The cost will be \$10 per person or \$15 couple to cover TGIC's \$225 outlay for use of the upstairs hall and a disk jockey, plus another \$25 for chips and prizes. Joe will be offering a cash bar and their usual menus of comestibles. Karen & Denise have promised that the DJ that Joe offered will not play Jazz, except as "interludes between sets" and ask for assistance in getting the word out so as to draw a bigger and more diverse crowd than last year, when about 22 people attended. The hope is that a DJ will draw a younger crowd, bringing new blood to sample TGIC during the celebration of freedom of expression (including gender expression) that is Halloween.

Reply to Selkie:

1) Smoking will be permitted at the party; however, if too many participants object, impromptu arrangements will be made for a designated smoking area, external to the party room.

2) Costumes, fancy dress, and other party clothes will undoubtedly be on display; costumes are encouraged but not mandatory. Changing facilities will be available, as well as free party snacks, door prizes of questionable taste, a lite menu, and a cash bar. DJ will offer a variety of music & appears well-prepared.

3) Thanks for your interest. Yvonne has volunteered some help organizing the affair. Anyone else? Karen: [REDACTED] m or Callan: The [REDACTED] h.

Why do banks charge you an "insufficient funds fee" on money they already know you don't have? Does the reverse side also have a reverse side? Why is the alphabet in that order?

Brotherly Lovely

By Kelly [REDACTED]

IN MANY WAYS, THE GANG HERE IN SAN JOSE today seated around the table chowing down lunch and shooting the breeze mimics retirees coffee-klatching from Waffle Houses in Minnesota to greasy spoons in Arizona. The topic is President Bill Clinton--and Clinton's irrepressible zipper--of course. Ed, with a POW/MIA cap perched on his balding head, nudges the conversation on to the bullish stock market.

The sixtysomethings chew on this for a while until Danielle pulls out pictures and starts passing them around. As Ed reaches for the photos, one might notice his long acrylic nails done in a perfect French manicure. And one might notice the look of quiet pride as he gazes upon that photo of himself dressed in a stunning full-length gown receiving a woman's kiss and a long-stemmed rose.

Ed--also known as Lois--and Danielle, Dolly, Joan and the others are part of the "Thursday Irregulars," a group of transvestites who have been getting together in San Jose for lunch and informal chitchat for more than 20 years. Today, they're reviewing pictures of the Cotillion, a yearly coming-out party held in San Francisco for the transgender community. Although some are dressed as men while others are en femme at our luncheon today, the Cotillion--as the pictures beautifully demonstrate--is an opportunity to pull out all the stops. Bugle beads and spangles, high heels and hairspray rule at this pageant of the feminine.

Although the sexual revolution has freed gays and lesbians--even transsexuals--from at least some of society's wrath and misunderstanding, crossdressers may be the last sexual fringe stuck in the closet. However, if the goings-on here in the South Bay are any indication, that door to secrecy and shame may finally be swinging open to the faint rays of understanding.

[Da Bomb] GROUND ZERO for this loosening of society's corset may well be Carla's.

Entering the low-slung pink building tucked behind San Jose's Billy DeFrank Lesbian and Gay Community Center on Stockton Avenue, a visitor is struck by decor that whispers "genteel." The muted pink and mauve interior with tastefully appointed touches gently reminds all who enter of owner Carla Blair's No. 1 admonition: This is a place where visitors and regulars are expected to act like ladies. Never mind that on any given day, Blair may be the only one present actually born with female plumbing.

Opened last August, Carla's--a combination tearoom, beauty salon, boutique and social center--has quickly gained a worldwide reputation within the transgender community as the Lourdes of gender transformation for crossdressers and transsexuals. It is also the latest meeting place for the Thursday Irregulars. Joanie Sheldon, a retired Navy bomber pilot now in her 70s, is impeccably dressed in a pantsuit with knit cardigan. Her white-haired wig curls about a wide-set face and friendly eyes. Joan has already covered a few points of etiquette for me during a phone conversation earlier. Transvestite, TV, cross-dresser and CD are all acceptable terms, though individuals may quibble over semantics. Joanie reminds me that CDs are predominantly heterosexual, while drag queens are usually gay ("Queens caricature women," adds one of the Irregulars later. "We want to be like women.").

Neither is to be confused with transsexuals, men or women who seek sex-change surgery. However, one cross-dresser passes on a joke commonly told in the transsexual community: 'You know what the difference is between a transvestite and a transsexual? About three years.' Cross-dressers do not find this knee-slappingly funny.

To keep things confusing, both transvestites and transsexuals fall under the umbrella term "transgender," which San Jose sex therapist Mildred Brown defines as anyone with profound problems or questions about his or her gender identity.

When dressed en femme--the preferred term to

indicate women's dress -- cross-dressers expect to be referred to as ladies, by the feminine possessive pronoun and by their fem names. Yet at this gathering today, it gets a tad confusing because a fair number of the guys show up as guys. No matter, it is the feminine spirit that is with us today.

Like Joan, the others here en femme are tastefully attired. No garish Ru Pauls, no tacky micro-mini skirts, but instead a heartfelt attempt to embrace the inner gal, not the inner trollop.

Not that any here would pass as women--at least not on second glance. Strong jaws and 5 o'clock shadows give a nonverbal heads-up to even the least observant that not all is kosher beneath the skirts. But it's not about tricking or deceiving observers, these gals and guys say. Dressing as a woman is about honesty. Authenticity. About acknowledging that part -- what Jung might call the "shadow self" -- that is essential to the whole.

[Cross to Bear] ALTHOUGH THE cross-dressing urge is undeniably strong, perhaps impossible to thwart, Danielle does not like referring to it as a compulsion. The 40ish 3-D animator, dressed today in a shoulder-baring peasant blouse and wearing just a dab of lipstick, believes that compulsion is a phrase too easily paired with addiction -- a term defining a self-destructive habit. For Danielle, happily married to a woman who enjoys and supports Danielle's transvestitism, cross-dressing is anything but.

"One of the challenges is to embrace more of the femininity than just the outward," Danielle says. She admits, like many of the men present, that she learned to discover and appreciate her softer side. But for every Danielle, there may be a Dolly, a former bus driver who today is wearing a dark purple sheath dress offset by a wine-red wig. "The story not being told [about transvestites] is the suffering among young people," Dolly announces, as a knowing quiet falls among those gathered. "I see it as a health issue. The natural reaction [when we realize this about ourselves] is shame and humiliation, which creates a vast array of psychological

damage."

Some nod in agreement. Dolly says her path took her through suicide attempts and state mental hospitals. Although she is married today to an understanding wife, Dolly still wears an air of palpable sadness.

Joanie clears her throat. "I think every young person has trouble accepting themselves, no matter the circumstances," she says. She's right--the rocky road of adolescence is a hellish journey even without the added burden of this secret. Joanie, a former Navy pilot who fought in two wars, is convinced that learning to accept her cross-dressing was "the most difficult thing I've ever done. I used to see it as my cross to bear," she says, no pun intended. Joanie tells of the purges--gathering up all the girly things and burning or throwing them away -- and everyone nods. "But it would come roaring back with a vengeance," she says. Joanie's wife of 25 years, who passed away just months ago, knew of Joanie's transvestitism, as do her children and grandchildren. She regularly attends her church in women's clothes ("Sunday is my cross-dressing day"). But who is it, exactly, who goes out in women's clothes--to church, to Costco, to the shopping forays at Nordstrom?

"When I go out, I realize that I'm a guy," Joanie says. "I think people look at me, but I've been doing this a long time and I'm very comfortable." (more later)

A wealthy couple had plans to go to an evening ball. They advised their butler that they were giving him the evening off to do as he pleased, but the wife returned early due to a headache.

She found the butler on the couch watching TV. She slowly moved towards him and sat down very seductively. She then told him to come closer. Then even closer. She moved forward and whispered in his ear "Take off my dress...". "Now take off my bra. "Next remove my shoes and stockings." "Now remove my garter belt and panties" She then looked deep into his eyes and in a sharp voice shouted "The next time I catch you wearing my clothes, you're fired".



A TRANSGENDER



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(518) 436-4513 (live Thurs.7:30-10 PM)

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

TGIC Officers

President	Winnie [REDACTED]
Vice President	Tina [REDACTED]
Secretary	open
Treasurer	Winnie [REDACTED]
Newsletter Editor	Vicky [REDACTED]

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Readers are invited to submit articles relevant to the Transgendered Community for consideration. You may bring or mail typed pages for publication to the TGIC clubroom. Format should follow that shown in the current newsletter. You may also e-mail the articles to [REDACTED]. The article should be part of the body of the e-mail.

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

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BECOME AN IFGE MEMBER

The International Foundation for Gender Education is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Basic membership is \$25 per year. Subscriptions to Transgender Tapestry are \$40. Brochures and forms are available in the TGIC Club Room. Call or write to:
IFGE (617) 899-2212
PO Box 229
Waltham, MA 02154-0229

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TGIC On-Line

All transgendered people are invited to join TGIC On-Line, an informal e-mail network sponsored by Transgenderist Independence Club (TGIC). Messages exchanged on TGIC On-Line focus on events of interest to transgendered people in a region from Lake Placid to Newburg. If you are interested in joining the network, or want more information about TGIC, send an e mail message to: TGIC-request@hartebeest.com with any subject line and in the message body, the text:

JOIN TGIC
STOP

(Please note: JOIN TGIC must be on line 1. STOP must be on line 2) You will receive an automated acknowledgment (Journal) of your request, which must be approved with the list moderator.



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To Bobbi-Jo from Vicky:
"Pop a Stent, sis!"

Calendar and Events

TGIC meetings are held Thursdays at 7:30 in the clubhouse.

Events of Note

PRIDE

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| October 1 | Awards Banquet with speaker Carl McCall |
| October 2 | Golf Tournament; Extravaganza with Men Out Loud and Michelle Balon at the Egg |
| October 3 | One Dance, Dance Of The Proud; Under 21 Dance |
| October 4 | Noon March & Rally in Washington Park with Kate Clinton |
| October 9-12 | GLBT Muslim Retreat, Boston |
| October 10, 24 | Twenty Club, Hartford |
| Oct 15-17 | NLGLA Law Conf., Boston |
| October 18-25 | Fantasia Fair |
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