



Rosebuds

May 2005
Volume 18 Number 5

The Monthly News Letter of the New England Tiffany Club



TCNE SUPPORTS FENWAY COMMUNITY HEALTH IN RENEWED TRANS HEALTH PROGRAM

Several TCNE Board Members attended a Transgender Town Meeting sponsored by the Fenway Community Health Center on March 31. The purpose of the meeting was to gather all the Trans Organizations in the greater Boston area to announce that Fenway wanted to address concerns expressed about transgender care received by patients at Fenway and that they wanted the communities help to improve and monitor their activity. Dr. Randi Kaufman, Fenway's Coordinator of the Trans Health Program told the 100 people who attended the changes that have been made to make the program more respectful and streamlined to its patients. The purpose of the meeting was to seek assistance from the different organizations in the greater Boston area. Both Sarah Anne Thompson, TCNE President and Cheryl Easton, TCNE Vice President, expressed Tiffany's willingness to help in any way to work with Fenway to make their program better. Ms. Easton told the meeting, "very often people go to meetings and complain about the past and never offer to help with the future. Well Tiffany is here and we want to help from tonight on." Fenway promised to hold meetings in the future on the subject.

For more information on the Transgender Health Program at Fenway Community Health, please contact Dr. Randi Kaufman at (617) 927-6251 or rkaufman@fenwayhealth.org



FROM TCNE TO THE BEST SELLER LIST



We all remember the first time that we showed up at Tiffany, knees knocking, hoping we didn't look too out of place. For Alice Novic, her first time was while studying at Harvard she came to TCNE and went through what the rest of us have suffered through. She moved on in life, got her medical degree and settled in southern California. She has written a book titled, Alice In Genderland. The book tells the story of Dr. Richard Novic, Harvard-educated psychiatrist and cross dresser. No memoir like it has ever been published. Most of the time, he is a man at the office or a husband and father at home. But, one evening a week, she is a woman about town, shopping, dining, dancing, and dating a man for over five years. And it's all out in the open.

Although he now leads a richly expressive life, Dr. Novic suffered since childhood with a secret, a desire he was in no way equipped to handle, but one that eventually burst through his denial, a few months before his wedding date. Just once, he felt, while he still could, he had to know what it felt like to be a woman.

Like Alice in Wonderland, his curiosity led him to fall headlong down a rabbit hole, through desperate straits, mind-opening surprises, heart-rending changes, and boundless love. By the time he was back on his feet, he was a different person, living a lifestyle he hadn't known existed. Anyone who has struggled to figure out who

GENDER JOURNEY

By Frances Cardullo Part 1

Preface Coincidentally I am writing this on the one year anniversary of my GRS surgery, April 27th, 2004. I



will start with a copy of an emailing that I sent to everyone on my transitions email list.

To my dear Family and Friends,

Today, April 27th, marks the one year anniversary of my GRS surgery. Some of you see me daily and others only occasionally. Many of you only hear from me when I send my quotes for the day (QFTD). All of you are special to me in some way

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rected to our mail or e-mail ad-
dresses. We do not recommend
contact via the telephone.**

Frances - Cont. from page 1

or another and therefore, are on my "transitions" email list. This will be the last transitions emailing.

*The purpose of this email is to give you a post-op update after one year. In a word, I feel **great**. My health is good and my healing is just about complete. I am grateful to all the friends and family who have been supportive of me during my transition. Now that it's all behind me, I am able to focus my mental energies on my business and whatever the future holds for me. It's interesting to note that in about 6 weeks (June 19th - to be exact) I will turn 65. I don't have any thoughts about retiring but I sure would like to slow down a bit. Two days after my 65th birthday, my wonderful son Francis Paul will turn 21.*

*So, time for a few reflections before signing off. First, the most common question that I'm asked is, "do you have any regrets"? Emphatically **NO** with two exceptions. I regret that Karyl can't accept (or even acknowledge) Frances even though I still love her, as a person, not as a spouse. To some extent I can understand but, it's the total rejection as if I were some sort of really bad person that I don't understand.*

The second regret is that I didn't have the courage to transition earlier in my life. The down side to that is I wouldn't have had (or might not have had) my wonderful son Francis Paul.

Has my life been different? That depends upon how you look at it. Going to the bathroom is different and I am now more excited about life than I have ever been but I'm also more relaxed and have learned to laugh at things more than I ever did. I even laugh at my own "dumb blonde" moments. Certainly I am more at peace with myself, after having lived a secret lie for so many years.

My brother's sudden death about 6 weeks before my surgery caused me to reflect a lot on life in general. First of all, no matter how long you live, it's still to damn short. I used to think that the person who dies with the most toy wins. Not so! As I have grown older, I realize that the more I can do to bless other peoples lives and in my own very very small way try to make this world a better place because I have lived in it is what's really important.

Thee is so much more to say but it will be better to keep this note short. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to drop me an email. (Better yet, stop in for a cup of coffee) In closing, I would like to thank God for all the many blessings that I have had and continue to have in my life. I'm also thankful for my family, friends, business associates and the skilful hands of Dr. Pierre Brassard and his very competent staff in Montreal.

*God Bless you all, Love,
Frances*

Iwould like to thank Cherl Easton, editor of the Tiffany Club newsletter, Rosebuds, for encouraging me to put this article together. I have compiled forty two pages of notes over the past five years. There have been times of sadness and joy, depression and highs, rejection and acceptance, friends and foes (transitioning is when you find out who your true friends are), confusion and enlightenment, therapists and shrinks, doctors and surgeons and voila... Frances. Was it that easy? No - Hell no!

"You may be wondering what has happened to Frank. Here is a brief explanation. Because of a condition known as gender dysphoria, I have made a gender transformation and I am now Frances. This decision didn't come eas-

Frances - Cont. on page 7

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Cheryl Easton



We welcome our new National Correspondent Christine Hochberg to the Staff of ROSEBUDS. Christine attends more TG events every year than anybody. She recently came back from the annual "CALIFORNIA DREAMING" held in San Jose. This event has always been in the top 5 events to attend every year on the "MUST" attend events. By that, they would have the guests, vendors, TG and TS stuff, doctors and sexy people types that bring

in the crowds every year. Well, spring in San Jose brings pretty good weather the last time I checked and there were no unusual problems this year when this year's event drew a record crowd of: 80 people. No I didn't lose a number, it was EIGHTY people total who showed up for the weekend. So what happened? Hard to say from 3,000 miles away. But if you think about our little event in January that had close to 400 people show up during a snowstorm and come every year in similar numbers, we must be doing something right. We get a lot of feedback from people about First Event and we listen and work to make changes each year based on those suggestions to improve the product. What is strange to me though is that 98% of the feedback we get is from people who go to First Event who are Non Tiffany Members. In fact, we get very little if any feedback from TCNE Members about anything at the club. Aside from First Event, let's look at the other

TCNE does nothing. There's never anything going on there. Same old stuff at Tiffany. It's not like it used to be.

events TCNE runs during the year. The Board of Directors has tried for almost 2 years to fill the position of Programs Chairperson with no takers. Last year, a non-member complained to a TCNE Member about the bathroom policy at a location where we held 3 outside events a year. The Board voted because of that policy not to hold events at that location any longer. Nobody could come up with another place to hold these events as well as the former location. Two Members complained about the decision and I urged them to make a formal motion to the Board to reconsider the action

of not holding events at Randolph Country Club. Neither Member chose to take that action and no other Members have come

forward to complain or ask the Board to reconsider, so the ban remains in effect. We used to have a group of people who would go to the "99" every Tuesday night around 9PM and anybody that wanted to go along was welcome. That group has disappeared. We ask for ideas from Members about outside programs/events/socials we could have. Nobody offers an idea, comment or show any signs of life on the subject. Then the club hears or reads things directed at Tiffany like:

TCNE does nothing. There's never anything going on there. Same old stuff at Tiffany. It's not like it used to be.

When I see or hear this stuff, my feeling is not to blame the people in charge of the club. The Board, (and yes I'm the Chair of the BOD) works very hard to keep this place open and helping people. As an all volunteer group, we

have an ever shrinking number of people willing to give their time to help this organization. A lot of people only volunteer criticisms and complaints about the way things are run around here. A lot of them don't even come to the club on a Tuesday night and express their thoughts. It's a lot easier to bitch on the web or through others when you don't even walk through the door yourself. Let's get one thing clear: TCNE MISSION REMAINS THE SAME AS HAS BEEN FOR 26 YEARS. THE EFFORTS OF THIS CLUB FULFILLS THE MISSION OF HELPING TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE EVERY DAY.

We need help and ideas with putting on programs. We need help from YOU OUR MEMBERS. An idea is fine, we won't even make you do the leg work to arrange it. So how bout an idea for:

- A social event
- Theatre, Concert
- A night out
- A vendor to come to our living room
- Lead a group to a restaurant some night

Or you might have something else that could be a Tiffany program. Please let us know on a Tuesday night or e-mail me via the Rosebuds e-mail address. So next time you complain, "there's nothing going on at Tiffany", take a look in a mirror. It's not our fault but might be the person looking back at you.



TRANS NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Pretty pop princesses are a dime a dozen, but meet Lady, not your typical girly group. These four foxy sirens are creating media frenzy as they poise to take the entertainment industry by storm. Korea's first transgender group is set to release its debut album in a Euro-dance style. And its members -- Sine, Sahara, Binu and Yoona -- born as he's are now she's with looks that many natural-born women would kill for. "We love chocolate, shopping and gossip. Mentally we were always women, the only difference being that we changed something physical, simply we are women with an extra scar," said one group member. And Lady's agency is banking on this with the manufactured group. In fact, the decision to create a transgender quartette is already reaping a marketing pay off. It's hard to believe that the members of lady aged 22 through 29 had to compete with other transgender contenders in an audition, where they say, almost 400 other showed up for their shot at fame. "Many people are speculating that you are trying to cash in on the novelty of being transgendered, but many are skeptical about if you have any talent, what do you say to that?" "Soon we'll show everyone what we've got on stage." Part of the paparazzi can be owed to the pioneering role of the Korean singer Harisu, who successfully created a niche for transsexuals in the traditionally conservative Korean entertainment industry. All post-op transgendered, the members of Lady say that they are hoping to find acceptance from the public, having been warmly embraced by their families. "It was hard for them at first, but now they support me." "I was very fortunate, when I became an adult and went to get my gender reassignment surgery, my whole family came to support me."

VERMONT WOULD BAN GENDER IDENTITY DISCRIMINATION

Citing instances where people have been beaten up and denied medical treatment because of the gender by which they identify themselves, advocates asked a House committee to expand the state's anti-discrimination laws to cover transsexuals and people who are transgendered. "They face discrimination in ways people don't think about every day," said Jes Kraus, a labor lawyer who described himself as a female-to-male transsexual. "This bill would be the first step to remedying these issues." The bill would add the phrase "gender identity or _expression" to the catalog of protected classes in anti-discrimination statutes covering everything from public accommodations to housing to financing to employment. In essence, if it became law, the bill would make it illegal to deny someone housing or lodging or a job because the person were a woman who presented herself as a man or had undergone treatments to change genders.

NEW DIRECTOR FOR GLAD

Lee Swislow, a top non-profit executive with extensive experience advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and those living with HIV, will be the new executive director of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders. Lee currently serves as Vice President of Justice Resource Institute in Boston, and will join the staff effective May 23, 2005.

AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

International, wellness, quiet and honors housing are among the themes Northeastern students can choose from when picking a place to live on campus. But the possibility of gender-neutral housing for Northeastern's transgender population could someday be an option as well." I think a lot

of this has gotten to the point where someone needs to sit down and understand what the process needs to be and really address what's going on with this part of [Northeastern's] population," said Emily Donahue, manager of communications and special projects in the office of student affairs. She said she hopes to meet with students "in reaction to some things I'd heard on campus," she said. These "things" include an incident on Feb. 9, when a student dressed as a woman presented a male identification at the Marino Center and entered the women's locker room, according to The Northeastern News Crime Log. The student, who is in gender transition, was asked to change before she entered the Marino Center. This is against Boston's discrimination laws, said Laura Langley, a law student and member of Northeastern Law's Queer Caucus, which allows individuals to access facilities based on their gender identity. Langley said the Queer Caucus sent out letters to the President's Office, the Marino Center and the Public Safety office requesting that transgender rights and housing on campus be addressed, but has only heard back from public safety, who told her Northeastern's University Law Counsel was forming a response to their concerns.

Sue Ekizian, associate director of the Marino Center, said she too was waiting for word from University Counsel on how to handle future situations like the one last month. "They haven't told me anything yet," she said.



MAIL LIST AND FORUM SIGN-UP A BIG HIT!!

TCNE Members and non-Members are welcome to sign-up for the new forums and mailing list found on our website. The forum allows you to get involved in several discussions setup or start your own topic. The mail list will put the latest TCNE news in your e-mail box quickly and NO SPAM!! When a new issue of ROSEBUDS is published on-line, you will be notified via e-mail. There are 2 separate signups for the forums and mail list, so make sure you fill out both and reply to the e-mail confirmation you get and you will be all set and up to date!

Dr. Novic - Cont. from page 1

they are and how they want to live will see themselves in this powerful life story.

"poignant, honest, amazing... Finally a pull-no-punches memoir by a crossdresser in search of herself and the truth." --Gina Lance, Editor-In-Chief, GIRL TALK magazine

Dr. Novic is a contributor to Girl Talk Magazine and the book is available on Amazon, Borders and the other usual book outlets. Dr. Novic will be joining us at the Tiffany booth on Saturday June 11th during Pride Day on Boston Common. She will be signing copies of her book and meeting old friends from the Tiffany Club.



MAKE YOUR PLANS FOR FIRST EVENT 2006

The First Event Committee has set the dates for the 26th edition of FIRST EVENT. The 2006 program will run from Thursday January 19 through Sunday January 22, 2006.

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Night of a Thousand Gowns

By Frances R. Cardullo

To say that this night was the ultimate dress up night out would be an understatement. It all started one afternoon late in February when I got a call from Veronica. She was the Veronica of "Miss Vera's school for Boys who want to be Girls". I asked her to email me the information and I would get back to her in a couple of days.



The event was "Night of a Thousand Gowns" put on by the Imperial Court of New York. The Court is a serious philanthropic trust, with a whimsical outlook on life, which has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for donation back into the community. Their members come from all walks of life, embracing the Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual / Transgender communities. They are glamorous. They are fun. They are everywhere.

Michelle and I were privileged to attend this fantasy evening that concluded at midnight with the coronation of both a King and Queen of the NY Imperial Court. We drove down to New York Friday afternoon and since we were going against the weekend exodus, the ride was quick and easy with minimal traffic. We first went to Miss Vera's place to pick up the tickets and a top that she was loaning me to cover my shoulders since the gown I would be wearing was sleeveless

We arrived at the Marriott Marquis hotel in Times Square, where the event was to be held, about seven. The choice of staying at the Marriott was quite fortuitous. Although we could have stayed someplace less expensive, the thoughts of traveling to the hotel in a gown by taxi, in New York just didn't appeal to either one of us. The real fortuitous part was that it rained hard all day Saturday and into the evening.

After settling in (quickly I might add since we were both hungry) we went to one of my favorite haunts in the City. The Playwright Tavern just off Broadway. It's an Irish pub but what makes it my favorite is that the food is good and there is never a wait to get in.

Saturday we woke up to rain and once again was thankful for the decision to stay at the Marriott. The day was very laid back for both of us since roaming the city was out of the questions. My biggest disappointment was that I had hoped to find a shoe store that catered to women with large feet.



Michelle & Me after Mikaela

Miss Vera had made arrangements for Michelle and I to have a makeover and our hair done right in our room. At four o'clock on the dot, Mikaela knocked on the door. She was a love and very professional doing the make up for the CBS news crew. Mikaela did much to contribute to the experience and I am hoping that she can be convinced to attend first event and do makeovers there. Mikaela finished with us at six thirty, just in time for us to head down stairs to the grand ballroom.



About that gown on the right

Arriving at the grand ballroom, fashionably on time, we were greeted by the site of every imaginable gown and male attire imaginable. For example; there was a handsome gentleman dressed in a tux with a beautiful doll attached to his wrist by a chain. He was dragging the doll every where. He was a "drag queen"! Oh, did I mention the open bar from the time the event started until it ended at midnight?



The "Drag Queen"

Tables in the ballroom were all pre assigned and Miss Vera has a great



The Grand Ballroom



Corset anyone?

location on the aisle at the end of the stage. Once we sat down, the food didn't stop coming all night and, it was excellent. In addition to the food there were Broadway style productions and entertainment by famous names all night. Angela Landsbury was supposed to be there but couldn't make it. The list of attendees read like a "who's - who of New York. It was a fairy tale evening for all who attended and I recommend it to anyone who might have to opportunity to attend in the future. I know that I'll be going back if I get invited again. The evening ended with the coronation of a new King and Queen.



And I present to you the new Queen for 2005 - 2006. Her gown had a twenty five foot train!



And I thought I was a tall woman

HELP NEEDED FOR COLLEGE STUDY

My name is Irene St. Onge and I am a Boston University student who is producing a documentary on trans-genders and am looking for anyone who would like to be featured. The aim of this project is to try to shed light on your community, and further educate the public about Trans-genders. In order to do this I really want to get to know your community and see t the day to day life of a transgendered individual is like. I was hoping that you could email me back some information or maybe lead me in the right direction of someone who would be interested in participating. Thank you so much for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks Very Much!
Regards,
Irene St. Onge
istongel@bu.edu

Frances - Cont. from page 2
ily; I have resisted it for many, many years. Therapists who specialize in this area all agree that it is almost impossible to “treat” and the solution is to live fully as the gender that feels natural to us.

As Frank, I have been very successful, as success is defined by our culture. Yet, I was miserable because there was something inside that I was denying, a very major part of myself. As time passed, however, it became clear that I would have to deal responsibly with my own personal gender issues, which is what I have done over the past several years.

I am sure that this will be a shock to some people, a serious consideration to others, and, I hope, a non-issue for most. I like to tell people that I am the same person I’ve always been, just with a different look. I will be happy to discuss my transition with you at any time.”

--Quoted from *Introducing Frances* – a

letter I handed out to business associates and friends.

Below is the introduction to my bio, written for my 45th high school reunion in 2003

As I write this bio, I am at 37,000 feet typing into my laptop computer and sipping a cup of coffee. Who of us could have predicted how much our lifestyles would change through technology and our collectively raised consciousness in the 45 years since we graduated? Even bigger in the change department – who would have predicted that 45 years later, Frank would be transitioning to Frances at the age of 63? But, I’m ahead of my story. Let’s go back to the beginning and bring you up to date chronologically...

Ho hum another transsexual’s transition story. Yes and no. Every transsexual has a story that is entirely unique

Frances - Cont. on page 8

EVENTS MAY 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Open Meeting 7 - 11 PM	4	5 You Are Not Alone 7:30 PM	6 Couples, Friends and Families 7:30 - 9P	7
						Spring Fling Weekend - P Town
8 Mother’s Day	9	10 Open Meeting 7 - 11 PM	11	12	13	14
Spring Fling						
15	16	17 Open Meeting 7 - 11 PM	18	19 You Are Not Alone 7:30 PM	20	21
22	23	24 Open Meeting 7 - 11 PM	25	26	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day Observed	31 Open Meeting 7 - 11 PM	“If you think you can, you can. And, if you think you can’t, you’re right.” -- Mary Kay Ash <hr/> June 11 th is pride day			

LETTERS TO ROSEBUDS

Editor Note: This is real letter from the spouse of a TS woman to her in-laws who had sent both of them a letter advising that their son will be disowned by his entire family if he “doesn’t get his head screwed back on” and forget the idiocy of claiming to be a transsexual. The names have been changed to protect privacy. We thank the author for permission to publish it.

Dear Dad and Mom,

Thank you for your letter. I know how you’re feeling ... I was there several months ago. There are days when I’m still there. However, over the past several months, I have read several books, spoken to doctors and psychologists, and seen several documentaries. I now feel that I understand the issue of transsexuality- at times, more than I would care to. It has become a part of my daily life – and still a painful part of it. I love Mark. I always will. I do know, however, that he has struggled with depression since I have known him. There would be good times, and then he would sink back into depression. The last four years have been difficult for me but more so for Mark. Going to the psychiatrist last June took true courage as Mark decided to face the depression that has haunted him and us for so many years -- and to try to understand and erase it. When he told me about the transsexualism, I was in shock first. Then, like you, I tried to think of ways that I could change his mind. But I now know that nothing will fix this other than Mark’s going through the transition. This is not a choice; this is not a lifestyle. This is a medical condition a birth defect with the only “cure” being the course that Mark has begun. Surely, Mark has given this great thought. Have you ever known him not to totally research something? Have you ever known him not to think of all the angles? And really ... would anyone WANT to do this if he didn’t need to? I have seen the pain in his eyes as he watches me struggle with this reality. I have seen him go through physical and emotional pain as he starts this journey. And I can only imagine the anxiety he must have as we try to decide when best to tell our daughters, for most likely, they will need more time than I did to accept and move forward. He will likely lose them for several years. And anyone who truly knows Mark knows how much he loves them and how wonderful a parent he has been to them. Do I want this to happen? No. Did I see it coming? No. Do I want my husband back? Yes. Can I have my husband back? Perhaps – but it would only be a matter of time before he would need to go forward or again, become withdrawn, sullen and depressed. Am I angry? No. It’s not Mark’s fault that this has happened. Am I bitter? I was. But now I see that I had a wonderful person in my life for twenty years. And I will cherish that relationship as he moves forward. I have, through Mark, a wonderful family, special daughters, and many memories. I know how you feel. The loss is so great. I feel as if I am watching the person I love fade before my eyes. But I also know that the person that is emerging is happier. It doesn’t make ME happy, but I understand that this is the only way. I truly hope that I will have the strength to support Mark’s transition as it continues. I pray for that strength each day, and I do see myself getting stronger each day. I hope that others will join me as we give Mark/Christine what is needed our love, our understanding, our tolerance, and our acceptance as he moves forward. Mark claims that my journey will be harder. I think not. And his journey will be even more difficult if those he loves do not continue to love, support and understand him as he becomes the person he needs to be. I have had a year of great loss. First, my father. And then, my husband as I know and love him. I hope we will not lose you as we go forward.

With Love,
Maryanne



Frances - Cont. from page 7

to that person because our lives are unique. But, we all share the common thread of gender dysphoria. We feel that we are living in body of the wrong gender. Some children recognize that fact in their pre-teens. I realized it at about the time of my puberty but I didn’t understand it.

Was I a freak? I knew I had to be. Certainly I couldn’t tell anyone about my secret, I would be committed to the “funny farm”. Thus began my painful trip of a lifetime. It is not the intention of this article to write my entire life story but just enough of it to help put the pieces together.

Throughout my life my female inner self would pop up from time-to-time and I would push her back into the box much like the old-fashioned “Jackie in the Box” toys. Early in the year 2001 “Jackie” popped up again. This time I decided to do some research on the Internet before pushing “Jackie” back into the box.

She never went back in! I discovered that I was not a freak but part of a community of people who, just like me, questioned their gender identity. As part of my searching, I discovered the Tiffany Club of New England. My world opened up for me as I stepped through the portals of the Tiffany Club and I realized that I was not alone. Through the Tiffany Club I learned that there were gender therapists who consult with people like me. I chose Christine Becker in Lexington because Lexington was an easy drive from Cambridge. It was a fortuitous choice. Christine has always had the right advice at the right time for every situation that I managed to get myself into.

Next month in Part 2, Frances writes about the three years before her GRS.