



TransCentralPA Newsletter

Serving the Transgender Community of Central Pennsylvania since 1989

May 2009

WWW.TRASCENTRALPA.ORG

Volume 20, Issue 5

GROUP

Good Luck Danni! Our very own Danni Fi. has been asked to talk about Transgender Issues on Wednesday, May 6th from 7 to 9 pm at the Eastern Monroe Public Library in Reeders, PA. Her topics include: The Human Gender Spectrum, Gender Identity vs. Sexual Preference, Gender Identity Disorder and much more. This event is being sponsored by Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbian & Gays (PFLAG). Everyone is invited and refreshments will be available.

TransCentralPA Reception We have been invited to a reception following the Hedwig and the Angry Inch performance on Friday, May 8. See the side bar for more info.

May Dinner We'll be meeting at Scott's Grille (www.scottsgrille.com) for our May pre-meeting dinner on Saturday, May 9, at 5:30 pm. We'll sit down promptly at 6:00 pm. Menu items are priced between \$12 and \$30 with most entrees around the \$22 range. Please RSVP if you plan to attend the dinner at info@transcentralpa.org.

May Meeting Our next meeting will be Saturday, May 9, at 8:30 pm. Doors will open at approximately 8:00 pm for those needing to change. We will have our discussion groups, social time and some cookies.

April Meeting Stats: We had 16 people join us for dinner at Spice Restaurant in April and 25 people attended the group meeting!

Red Roof Inn Discount! We have negotiated a special deal with the Red Roof Inn on Eisenhower Blvd (across from Liquid891). Please see the backside for more information and rates!

Need Brochures? We just received professional printed brochures for the group to hand out at community events, speaking engagements, visitors, guests and others that are interested in our group.

Announcements

Pride Volunteers Needed The Central Pennsylvania Pride fest is Jul 25. TransCentralPA will be marching in the parade in the morning and manning a booth at the event. If you are interested in either or both, please email us or talk to Jeanine.

EVENTS

Ladies Night Out If you would like to join our friends in the Allentown/New Hope area for their monthly dinners on the 4th Saturday of the month, contact Emily at emilyplatt@netcarrier.com.

National Equality Rally, May 3 in Philadelphia. Join organizations, grassroots activists and straight allies from across the nation as we demonstrate at Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell—the site where the Gay Pioneers launched the movement with protests each Fourth of July from 1965 to 1969. Help show support of trans-inclusive hate crimes legislation and Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Visit www.nationalequalityrally.com

Philadelphia TransHealth Conference Jun 11-13, 2009. For more information, visit www.Trans-health.org

2009 Beauty at the Beach Nov 4-8. in Rehoboth Beach, DE. Prices for double occupancy start at \$580 for Thursday to Sunday. Visit www.cdspub.com/batb.html for more info and details.

OTHER

TransFaith Online announces new spirituality track and Interfaith Trans-Clergy Roundtable to be held at Philadelphia TransHealth Conference (June 11-13) www.transfaithonline.org/transhealth/.

One Step Forward On April 28th, the United States House of Representatives voted 249 to 175 in favor of the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H. R. 1913), moving one step closer to the passage of the first federal law to include gender identity and transgender people in a positive way. Visit www.NCTEquality.org for more info.

We're Invited!



The LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central Pennsylvania and St. Michael's Lutheran Church are co-sponsoring a reception specifically for TransCentralPA and the Transgender Community following the **Hedwig and the Angry Inch** performance at the Open Stage Theater in Harrisburg on Friday, May 8th. The address of the theater is:

223 Walnut Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
(717) 232-6736

The performance starts at 8:00 pm. You do NOT need to have attended the performance to attend the reception afterwards. Key personnel from both organization including the Directors from the Center want to speak with TransCentralPA and the Trans-community directly in hopes of developing more inclusive programs and events for Transgender Individuals.

In fact, they want to ensure everyone is invited to the reception. This is a very gracious offer and wonderful opportunity! Please RSVP if you are considering attending at

Hedwig and the Angry Inch is about a boy named Hansel (a.k.a Hedwig) born in East Berlin, who falls in love with an American G.I. and undergoes a sex-change operation in order to marry him and flee to the West. Unfortunately, nothing works out quite as it is suppose to...It's a rocking ride--funny, touching, and ultimately inspiring to anyone who has felt life gave them an inch when they deserved a mile. This rock musical is being performed at the Open Stage in Harrisburg, April 17 – May 10.

Our meeting night is now the second Saturday of the month

Calendar of Events

bold items are TransCentralPA sponsored

Apr 17 May 10	Hedwig & the Angry Inch at Open Stage in Harrisburg, PA
May 1	Black & White Benefit at Club XS, York, PA
May 2	Laptop Lounge , King of Prussia, PA
May 3	National Equality Rally
May 6	Trans-presentation at Eastern Monroe Library, Reeders, PA
May 8	Hedwig & the Angry Inch at Open Stage in Harrisburg, PA Reception Afterwards for the Transgender Community
May 9	TCPA Dinner at Scott's Grille TCPA Group Meeting
May 16	Laptop Lounge , King of Prussia, PA
May 23	Tran-Quility Support Group Baltimore, MD
May 23	Ladies' Night Out Dinner New Hope, PA
Jun 11	Trans-Health Conference Philadelphia, PA
Jun 13	TCPA Dinner TCPA Group Meeting
Jul 11	TCPA Dinner TCPA Group Meeting
Jul 25	CentralPA Pridefest Harrisburg, PA

Visit www.TransCentralPA.org for more event info!

Last Panzee Press Article

Dear Members & Readers,

For the past few months I have been writing a column for the Panzee Press to represent the voice of TransCentralPA and the Central PA transgender community. I submitted my article for the May issue a couple of weeks ago; yesterday I was a bit stunned to receive the news directly from editor and founder Bolton Winpenny that Panzee Press has gone to the grave due to lack of revenue.

Bolton said, "Over the last two years, we believe Panzee has made a difference in our corner of the world by helping to unite and give support to the sexual minority community. It's been a lot of fun; the best part was meeting and working with all of you, along with many other individuals & groups within the LGBT community. Panzee will always remain deep in my heart as an accomplishment in my life of which I am most proud. Our final issue was April 2009, there will not be a May issue. I apologize that you put thought and time into your last article which won't be published in Panzee."

Remember, too, that Bolton & his brother Mike were a big help to the success of our *Keystone Conference* by their efficient and so very reasonable printing of our event program. Somehow I feel they really won't be gone for too long....

My last article for the PP follows, as you'll not read it in that dear little glossy booklet.

Being Out

What's the big push and pressure about being "out" to the entire world? Is there some wonderful reward, a gold star pasted on your forehead, if you so declare? Isn't it enough to simply be who you are, to live your life with pride as the person you believe in?

This begs the question of *how* "out"...does it really matter if you get the gold star? It does matter that for some LGBT people that being completely "out" might destroy their very lives. Such is the case for so many of us transgender people; as we travel along our journey though life, we learn when to open up proudly...and when to move quietly below the radar. As with all other marginalized people, it is very important for all of us to be "out": to ourselves, and our friends and supporters. We need to accept and love ourselves- all of who and what we are- and we need choice others to accept and love us, too.

Now, as an advocate and activist for transgender people, I certainly appreciate that we can only advance understanding and acceptance for our kind by openly participating with the public. Why, the LGBT community is only now beginning to understand the transgender dilemma ...with the general public lagging far behind. Only by mixing with everyman & everywoman, and sharing our stories and being open about being transgender can we spread the knowledge that we, too, are the same as they- people that desire to be treated with equality and respect.

On Saturday April 18 several of us attended a very worthwhile presentation hosted by St Michael's Lutheran Church titled "Gender identity and Our faith Communities: A Congregational Guide to Transgender Advocacy" by Dr. Jamie Ann Meyers from the HRC (Human Rights Campaign). I must admit I was a bit biased walking in—not because of Jamie- but because I still have a very big problem with the HRC for their last-minute betrayal of the "T" in LGBT when ENDA (Employment Non Discrimination Act) came up against the wall last autumn. I was present at the Southern Comfort Conference in September (a transgender conference with over 800 attendees) - when Joe Solmonese, President of HRC, and the keynote speaker that evening, promised to all of us that HRC was doing everything possible for the transgender cause...that we were of the fold. Weeks later HRC abandoned us in the futile hope that ENDA would fly if they jettisoned the extra Trans baggage. That the LGBT community responded with immediate fury for that action, coming out in favor and overwhelming support of transgender inclusion in *any* version of ENDA (as we all knew ENDA wouldn't pass in the Bush administration) was the great Phoenix that flew from the ashes.

See 'Panzee Press' on page 3...

Special Deal for Members & Guests!

		Standard Room	All-inclusive Business King
	Jan — Apr	\$39.99	\$49.99
	May — Aug	\$49.99	\$59.99
	Sep — Dec	\$39.99	\$49.99
<p>We have negotiated the above rates at the Red Roof Inn on Eisenhower Blvd (across from Liquid891) on our meeting nights only. You must call the hotel directly at (717) 939-1331 to reserve the room under the "TransCentralPA Group" rate.</p>			

Panzee Press (continued)

I digress...at the very onset of her talk Dr. Jamie seemed to elicit a feeling in her audience she didn't intend when she declared that she lived "24/7" as a transgender person, yet admitted that her parents, children, grandchildren, etc. did not know she was...not James. I have heard from more than a couple of the participants in today's workshop that such was tantamount to hypocrisy. Oh, dear...I agree and disagree at once. Consider: is the transperson that we knew so well for so long that has journeyed through transitioning from one gender to another with the support and love of our community, but who has disappeared and "gone stealth" (no longer openly admits to being trans, but rather attempts to "pass" as their chosen gender in their new identity, severing all ties with their past) a hypocrite? Thus, is Jamie really a phony, a pretender? She stated that her parents were old and frail, with not much time left in this lifetime, and she decided that sparing them the anguish of seeing their child transition genders was a gift she could give them. Frankly, I think that was an honorable and kind thing. She was able to do that for them, with no harm to herself. She made a conscious choice about how and to what extent she needed to be "out".

How "out" we are really boils down to economic survival...for ourselves and those we love and are closely tied to. Remember: transgender people are already "out"...our very presence announces that.

I love community- but not a community that demands that my admission as a fully qualified member means that must I endanger my very survival- and, more importantly, my partner's. Our community must respect everyone's right to self-determination and privacy, and especially concerning the matter of being "out". Let's not judge our family members too quickly or harshly, for we do not walk in their shoes.

Warmly,

Jeanine Ruhsam

Hello Everyone,

Recently TransCentralPA was asked to participate in a post-show discussion at the Open Stage Theater following their performance of the trans/rock musical "Hedwig & the Angry Inch". Jennifer and Danni stepped up to the challenge as our voice, and this is the positive response they provoked:

"Thank you for sending the ladies over for us. It was a great discussion! We couldn't get people to leave afterward! I think the crowd that stayed really got a lot out of what the speakers shared with us.

I want to tell you on a personal note that I was a little nervous about the afternoon as the only experience I have had with transsexuals have been very awkward and uncomfortable ones. But both Danni and Jennifer were so good at just being themselves and putting people at ease with their personalities and kind hearts, that it didn't take more than a moment for me to feel at ease with them, and I found myself wanting to talk more with them. It was a transforming experience for me and I think the work you do there is so wonderful and beneficial to our society. If there is ever anything I can do for you, I hope to be able to help.

Thanks again!

Julie Fallon
Coordinator of Educational Programs
Open Stage of Harrisburg

Thank you, Jenn & Danni. Every time we walk out, show our faces and speak our minds the world becomes a better place for transgender people. You led the way last weekend.

Interesting that "Hedwig" beckons again: the LGTB Community Center Coalition of Central PA along with St. Michael's Lutheran Church has extended a kind and generous invitation to our group for a reception on Friday evening May 8th, which I hope many of you will combine with our monthly meeting on the following day to make a full weekend. Here's the letter we received from Ted Martin, Presi-

From the President



Jeanine Ruhsam

dent of the LGBT Center Coalition/Common Roads:

"The Community Center Coalition and St. Michael's Lutheran Church would like to sponsor a reception after the performance in honor of your members. While I wish I could offer you tickets to the play too, I cannot. But I can say that the only cost of admission for the reception afterwards will be a promise to mix and mingle and share some friendly time in which we all can get to know each other a bit better.

I will be honest, the Community Center is working very hard to increase both our profile and programming. We know we need to make outreach to many different groups and organizations, and we saw this as a perfect first step in this effort. Of course, we also hope this isn't the last time our groups will work together. We need your input, your friendship and your support if we are to be successful in our efforts to create an inclusive community center, and what better way to start that conversation than over some wine and food.

Please give this some serious thought. It will be a terrific opportunity for you to teach us a little and build some friendships. Our young people will greatly benefit from what you all have to say, and it can only strengthen us moving forward. Along with our kids, I will be bringing our Board and maybe some other volunteers. Couple that with a good show, and it will be fun."

Please, please plan to attend if you possibly can, as we'd like to be able to respond to this call with a positive force. The play starts at 8:00 PM at the Open Stage Theater

223 Walnut St
Harrisburg, PA 17101
(717) 232-6736

The reception we are invited to begins after the performance. If you are unable to attend the play, you may still attend the reception- just tell the door keeper that you are from TransCentralPA and are there to attend the reception hosted by the LGTB Community Center Coalition. I hope to see many of you there!

Warmly,
Jeanine Ruhsam

TransCentral PA

c/o MCC of the Spirit
2973 Jefferson Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 236-7387

www.TransCentralPA.org
info@transcentralpa.org