



TransCentralPA Newsletter

Serving the Transgender Community of Central Pennsylvania since 1989

November 2012
Volume 23
Issue 7

www.TransCentralPA.org
info@TransCentralPA.org

TransCentralPA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

c/o MCC of the Spirit
2973 Jefferson Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Announcements

No November Dinner We will not be hosting a November dinner since the majority of attendees will be at the Fall Achievement Benefit.

November's Meeting YES!! We are having a small meeting on Saturday, Nov 10 at 8:30 pm at the MCC of the Spirit. Doors will open at approximately 8:00 pm.

Fall Achievement Benefit (FAB) is Saturday, Nov 10 at the Harrisburg Hilton Hotel. TransCentralPA is 1 of 3 entities receiving an award so dust off that Tux or find that perfect gown and come join us for a great night of fun. See page 2 for more details.

November Birthdays! Please say Happy Birthday to Ellen Da., Lorri Gr., Jennifer McC., Penelope Ro., Becky Wi., Colleen La., Cami Lo., and Patti Kn., Michael Jo., Shannon Br., Dyane Ma., Sara Ev., Happy Birthday!

TGDOR (Transgender Day of Remembrance) is Tuesday, Nov 20th on the steps of the Pennsylvania State Capitol Building. We are hoping the entire trans community and its supporters will attend and participate in this event. See the TransCentralPA website for details.

2013 Officer Nominations opened at our Oct 13 meeting. The nomination

Transgender Day of Remembrance Candlelight Vigil

3rd Street (front) Steps of the
Pennsylvania Capitol Building

Tuesday, November 20th

5:30 - 6:30 pm

See page 5 for more information...



window for 2013 Officers closes at our Dec 8 meeting prior to voting. If you are interested in volunteering or have a nomination, please contact our Secretary Suzane Oliva at info@transcentralpa.org.

December Potluck Dinner & Meeting will be held at the new LGBT Community Center located at 1306 N. 3rd Street in Harrisburg. Come and see the new Center and offer your input on whether or not TransCentralPA should move our monthly meetings there. Also, we will be hosting a potluck dinner starting at 6:00 pm so plan on bringing a side dish, drinks or dessert! More information and an electronic sign-up sheet will be announced soon.

2013 Keystone Conference website is now up! We are now solicit-

ing workshop proposals, vendors, advertisers and our much appreciated sponsors! The Harrisburg-Hershey Sheraton Hotel has extended us their low rate of \$99/night for the 5th year in a row (restrictions apply). As we finalize the details of the conference, we'll post additional information on the KeyStone website. Please take a moment to visit the website and mark your calendars for March 13-16, 2013!

Red Roof Inn Discount. We have negotiated a rate of \$42.99/night for 2012 for both TransCentralPA members and guests. To take advantage of this special offer, call the hotel directly at (717) 939-1331 and use the rate code "TCPA". They also are offering a special price for their Business King suites, too. Ask for details.

Have an announcement? Email it to us at info@TransCentralPA.org



The
KEYSTONE CONFERENCE
A Celebration of Gender Diversity

March 13th-16th, 2013 in Harrisburg, PA

www.Keystone-Conference.org

We've included a column on page five of this month's newsletter written by a good friend of mine. Jude is the President of our sister group TGEA in Washington, DC and we often speak together—as I do with leaders of other transgender support organizations across the country—about issues common to our groups. She writes about the attrition of members in her group, which underlies an overall dwindling attendance at similar groups nationwide. While older members cease coming for the reasons she states, many support groups are seeing fewer new people walk in the door. That's the issue I'd like to address, and I am not sure this is really indicative of a problem that needs a solution.

In the effort to answer “why are fewer people coming to transgender support group meetings?” we arrive at several possible answers, the most plausible being the most optimistic. It is simply that people don't feel the need for this support now as much as in the past. This support includes providing a safe place to freely express one's felt gender, friendship from fellows and allies, resources such as books and visual media, contacts with therapists and other professionals, and social interaction and networking.

Why, then, don't they need this support? There are many parts to that answer, among them the complete access to knowledge and services that the Internet provides. Another is the upwelling of social media that allows people of different interests to contact and interact with one another, both virtually and to arrange actual gatherings. However, the answer that gets the headline is heartening: our nation is slowly and finally coming to accept transgender people. Only a few years ago we were barely tolerated, and the positive change is because we are being seen and understood. As transgender people cease being ostracized as the “other” and find inclusion in our society they will no longer need the critical support required to cope with being marginalized and ostracized.

While we can feel positive about the shrinking need for first hand support resources, we know it's not time to close the doors yet. As long as one person asks, “Can you help me? I think I might be trans”, TransCentralPA will be there for them.

Warmly,

Jeanine Ruhsam



From the President



Jeanine Ruhsam

Calendar of Events

Bold text are TransCentralPA sponsored

Nov 1	Transexual Education Group Harrisburg, PA
Nov 2	Common Roads —LGBTQA Youth Harrisburg, PA
Nov 3	TGEA Meeting Arlington, VA
Nov 4	Fourth Annual TransParent Day
Nov 5	LGBT Center Women's Group Harrisburg, PA
Nov 7	Beauty at the Beach Rehoboth Beach, DE
Nov 9	Common Roads —LGBTQA Youth Harrisburg, PA
Nov 10	Fall Achievement Benefit Harrisburg, PA
Nov 10	TransCentralPA No Dinner Meeting @ MCC of the Spirit
Nov 11	Lake Erie Gala Erie, PA
Nov 15	The Curve —LGBTQA Youth York, PA
Nov 17	Laptop Lounge King of Prussia, PA
Nov 16	Common Roads —LGBTQA Youth Harrisburg, PA
Nov 20	Transgender Day of Remembrance Harrisburg, PA
Nov 24	ROSE Meeting York, PA
Nov 29	The Curve —LGBTQA Youth York, PA
Nov 30	Common Roads —LGBTQA Youth Harrisburg, PA
Dec 1	TGEA Meeting Arlington, VA
Dec 1	Laptop Lounge King of Prussia, PA
Dec 8	TransCentralPA Potluck Dinner @ LGBT Center Meeting @ LGBT Center After Hours @ Stock's
Mar 13	Keystone Conference Harrisburg, PA

Congratulations TransCentralPA!

The Fall Achievement Benefit (FAB) is the premier gala fundraiser of the LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania. It is a black tie dinner and dance affair honoring those in the area who have made significant contributions to the well being of the LGBT community. This year one of the three FAB awards is being given to an organization rather than to an individual.

We are especially honored to have just been notified that this award is being given to TransCentralPA in recognition of our dedicated support and advocacy of Central Pennsylvania's transgender people. Please plan to come join us for this festive occasion, for you—trans people, families, significant others and allies—are TransCentralPA!

www.FallAchievementBenefit.org

Visit www.TransCentralPA.org for details & more event info!

Trans-Headliners

Below are several news stories, blogs, opinions and resources for your reading pleasure. Opinions & views in these links cannot be assumed to be of TransCentralPA, nor the Officers or Members of TransCentralPA. Our goal is to simply provide you with information & thought-provoking viewpoints. If you would like to submit a story, please email us at info@TransCentral.org

[A Whipping Girl's Offence](#)

[Transgender woman pleads to avoid male jail](#)

[Transwoman shot in NoLibs](#)

[Is Sex Reassignment Surgery a Basic Right?](#)

[Special Report: 3.4% of U.S. Adults Identify as LGBT](#)

[U.S. Marriage Act Is Unfair to Gays, Court Panel Says](#)

[Thai 'transgender airline' grounded over finances](#)

[New Greenfield City Manager Underwent Sex Change](#)

[Malaysia Transsexuals Lose Cross-Dressing Court Case](#)

[Malaysian Court Rejects Challenge to Cross-Dressing Ban](#)

[Transgender Bird Spotted in New Zealand; First-of-its-Kind](#)

[Transwomen on Second Week of Prison Hunger Strike](#)

[Barbra Casbar Siperstein: Breaking ground in N.J., nationally](#)

[FAQ: Health Insurance Needs for Transgender Americans](#)

[British Columbia to Fund Phalloplasty Surgery for Transgender Men](#)

[Provocative Novel Tackles Today's Prevalent Issue: Transsexualism](#)

[Non-Discrimination Laws that Include Gender Identity and Expression](#)

[Transgender people no longer considered "mentally ill" to American Psychiatric Assoc.](#)

[Tasmanian intersex discrimination plans hailed as 'world first'](#)

[Sexual Minority Archives uncovers story of Marion Turner, transgender man who lived in Northampton a century ago](#)

[Ethel Person, Who Studied Sexual Fantasies, Dies at 77](#)

[I Discusses Being Transgender and God's Child in Ebony's November 2012 Issue](#)

[Judge OKs deal over gender on birth certificates](#)

[Why LGB People Should Care about Trans Bias in the Military](#)

[Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service transgender woman tells her story](#)

[Military Group Picks Trans Woman As Leader](#)

[Another trans woman's throat slashed and killed in Antalya, Turkey](#)

[Preview: "Fix My Transgender Life" - Iyanla: Fix My Life - Oprah Winfrey Network](#)

[Trans 'Matrix' Director Wachowski Gives Emotional Speech Revealing Suicide Plan](#)

[Transgender Theory: Embodying Research and Practice](#)

[Media Release on the 16th Intersex Awareness Day, 2012](#)

[Off-duty D.C. police officer convicted of assault with a deadly weapon](#)

[The Fourth Annual TransParent Day](#)

[Lana Wachowski: 'I made Cloud Atlas in order to challenge transphobia'](#)

[Police arrest 26-year-old Dallas man in murder of 'life partner' in N. Oak Cliff](#)

['I was a boy.. then a girl.. now I want to be a boy again': Agony of of teen who is Britain's youngest sex-swap patient](#)

[Brazilian trans was stoned to death by a group of assailants in the city of Aracaju](#)



Women's Group Meeting

POSITIVE ENERGY PARTY (PEP):
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Don't forget that the next Women's Group meeting is coming up on Monday, November 5 from 7:00-9:00 pm.

A birthday, anniversary, "just because" holiday is around the corner. Instead of running to the mall to purchase an overpriced impersonal gift for a loved one, why not support your local self identified LGBTQIA female creative spirits?

You are invited to The LGBT Center on Monday, November 5, from 7:00-9:00 pm for a marketplace for crafters, artists and collectors to sell or barter their handmade crafts and unique services. It is an opportunity to do your holiday shopping with a purpose, inexpensively.

What do you do on the side (legally) to make money? Do you make afghans, collages, jewelry, write poems, twist locks, braid hair, organize messy spaces, provide cooking lessons, provide zodiac readings, knit, rehab furniture, make outfits for pets, etc.? Bring samples of your items to showcase and/or be prepared to talk about your services.

Hosted by Shaashawn (The Voice)

LOOKING AHEAD

We will have the following meeting on Monday, December 3 from 7:00-9:00 pm, and then in the new year we will switch to the first Thursdays of each month based on participant feedback. Remember that at the end of each meeting we pick the topic for the following month and volunteers decide to make it happen. Please come with ideas and make sure your voice is heard!

Also, stay tuned for an opportunity to participate in a local production of Vagina Monologues!





Transgender Woman Wins Insurance Coverage for Sex Reassignment Surgery

TLDEF is thrilled to announce that they have resolved a claim on behalf of a transgender woman who had been denied health insurance coverage for sex reassignment surgery. Ida Hammer, a 34-year-old New York City resident, applied for pre-authorization for male-to-female sex reassignment surgery in July 2011. MVP Health Care denied her claim on the grounds that the surgery was "cosmetic" and therefore was not covered under the policy. MVP refused to alter its position and denied two internal appeals, even after TLDEF submitted extensive evidence in support of Ms. Hammer's claim.

Only after TLDEF threatened to file a lawsuit did MVP reverse its position and agree to cover the doctor-recommended procedure. MVP stated in its letter authorizing the surgery that "the requested surgery is medically necessary."

"I have been undergoing treatment for gender dysphoria for the past five years. My doctors determined that surgery is the only adequate treatment for my condition," said Ms. Hammer. "My insurance company should not be second-guessing my doctors. I'm relieved that it is finally treating me fairly and covering the health care I need."

"The well-established medical and legal consensus is that transgender-related health care is medically necessary care," said TLDEF executive director Michael Silverman. "This surgery is not designed to improve one's appearance, but rather to treat a recognized medical condition. Transgender individuals pay the same premiums and simply want the same

benefits as anyone else," he added.

The medical necessity of sex reassignment surgery has been widely recognized in medicine and law. Organizations such as the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health recognize surgery as medically necessary and support insurance coverage for it. Since the 1970s, numerous state and federal courts have recognized this surgery as non-cosmetic, medically necessary surgery. Even the Internal Revenue Service recognizes transgender-related surgery as medically necessary and tax deductible.

In addition to TLDEF, the legal team representing Ms. Hammer included Robert Goodman, Brandon Burkart, Katherine Kriegman, Ariel Meyerstein and Susan Reagan of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP.



New Resource Material Available

As you know, sexual violence can impact anyone regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, geography, ability, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. Because we are committed to supporting the work being done to serve all survivors and engage every community, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) and National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) partnered with many other organizations and experts to put together this newest collection of resources.

We are proud to share [**Sexual Violence & Individuals Who Identify as LGBTQ**](#), an information packet containing nearly a dozen resources focused on serving, engaging, and collaborating with individuals and communities who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ). **The packet contains resources to support counselors, advocates, preventionists, technical assistance providers, and allied professionals committed to affirming all individuals and communities.**

[The packet](#) contains an annotated bibliography, research brief, resource list, and a number of technical assistance materials. These resources are a result of mindful planning, teamwork, and authentic discussion. **We hope that the resources will both strengthen work already being done, as well as assist organizations in discovering a place to begin program development.** We would love to hear your thoughts about this packet, how you plan to use it, and any recommendations for improvements.

As always, the LGBTQ Workgroup at PCAR is here to answer any questions or respond to your training or technical assistance needs.



National Center for Transgender Equality

9th Anniversary Celebration

Wednesday, Dec 5, 2012
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

The National
Press Club Ballroom
529 14th St. NW
13th Floor

Washington D.C.

Ticket and sponsorship information will be available soon. For any other questions or concerns, please contact NCTE Development Manager Ace Portis at aportis@transequality.org.





“Movin’ On”

by **Jude Bienvenu, President**
*(Reprinted from TGEA's Pinnacle
 Newsletter, modified by Kristy Snow)*

I'm often asked at meetings, “Hey, what about what's-their-name? They used to be here a lot, but I haven't seen them in ages. Why did they stop coming? Shouldn't we invite them back?”

This is, I believe, a common phenomenon across the whole of our community, and I wanted to talk about this a bit in this month's column.

There are really several different reasons why folks drop out of our community, or at least, out of the immediate group community. I know many folks are confused, maybe even hurt, that old friends seem to disappear and not come back. Hopefully this may explain some of the reasons I've seen for folks to move on in their lives.

One is that something in their lives becomes more important than the meetings. I know several friends who came for several years, and then met someone who meant more to them than dressing up. So, they put “Mary” or “Mark” away. We all find times in our lives when we choose something that is more important to us than something else, and that's what I've seen several folks do. They can do it without regret, and without looking back, and if they're happy in the long run, well, then I'm happy that our group could have served some purpose in their lives and I wish them the best.

Also, it's something similar when folks go from dressing part-time to living full-time in their new gender. For many folks, attending a group meeting is a very special time – the once a month that they can dress and come meet with folks of a feather. It's a unique environment when you have to spend the rest of the month in that “other-mode”. However, when one is living as a woman or

man full time, the uniqueness of the meetings is not so great anymore. There isn't any specialness about the night anymore, except for meeting some old friends.

Another aspect of living full-time is that I've seen folks develop new interests in their lives, things they have always wanted to do. Somehow I think, the freedom of being full time gives folks the freedom to break out of old molds, and these folks often begin getting new interests that they never had the courage or impetus to try before. And as one has new interests that take up more and more of their time, one has to cut something out. And often, that can be the monthly group meetings.

An additional thing to consider is that there are many transgender related groups, and we are on the local, the smallest level. Yet attrition can occur within any of these groups, and when you lose someone, you want to find someone good as a replacement. After someone has gotten experience running a local group, assisting or even running major transgender conferences, folks can become the candidate that these state, regional, or national level groups are looking for when they need someone. It's like any company really, folks can get “promoted” and move up to more responsibility when the duty calls.

I often think of our support group as the “nest”, a nest for baby transgender folks, many of whom grow up and fly away. We're a “launching pad”, launching folks into the rest of their lives. And that's a real impact in the lives of these folks, something I think we can all be proud to provide.

So, when folks move on, I may miss them, but I don't feel sad. We are a group that, by our very nature, has members that will only be members for some finite period of time. And that's okay.

Transgender Day of Remembrance Candlelight Vigil

3rd Street (front) Steps of the
Pennsylvania Capitol Building

Tuesday, November 20th

5:30 – 6:30 pm

Come join us at the steps of the Pennsylvania Capitol Building for a candlelight event to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28th, 1998 kicked off the “Remembering Our Dead” web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Rita Hester's murder — like most anti-transgender murder cases — has yet to be solved.

Although not every person represented during the Day of Remembrance self-identified as transgender — that is, as a transsexual, crossdresser, or otherwise gender-variant — each was a victim of violence based on bias against transgender people.

We live in times more sensitive than ever to hatred based violence, especially since the events of September 11th. Yet even now, the deaths of those based on anti-transgender hatred or prejudice are largely ignored. Over the last decade, more than one person per month has died due to transgender-based hate or prejudice, regardless of any other factors in their lives. This trend shows no sign of abating.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people, an action that current media doesn't perform. Day of Remembrance publicly mourns and honors the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be forgotten. Through the vigil, we express love and respect for our people in the face of national indifference and hatred. Day of Remembrance reminds non-transgender people that we are their sons, daughters, parents, friends and lovers. Day of Remembrance gives our allies a chance to step forward with us and stand in vigil, memorializing those of us who've died by anti-transgender violence.

