



TransCentralPA Newsletter

Serving the Transgender Community of Central Pennsylvania since 1989

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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

August's Dinner will be at [Bricco](#) in downtown Harrisburg on Saturday, August 10th at 5:30pm. We'll sit down promptly at 6:00 pm. Please RSVP if you plan to attend at our [website](#).

August's Meeting is Saturday, August 10th at 8:30 pm. Doors will open at approximately 8:00 pm. Therapist Alexis Lake will be moderating the August discussion on these two topics:

1. *Wherever you are on the gender/presentation spectrum, what was it that made you decide you had to do something, or to tell someone?*
2. *If you have told a loved one your truth how did you decide who, when, where, and how to tell?*

Offer your thoughts to Alexis prior to the meeting—please send them to Discussion@TransCentralPA.org.

After Hours is at [Stock's on Second](#). Stock's offers an opportunity to mingle and socialize in a friendly atmosphere as well as an opportunity to dance to some great music. So for great conversation, friendship and more, please join us at Stock's on 2nd. There is no cover.

August Birthdays! Please say Happy

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The Fragile Financial World of Transgender People: Costs of Coming Out

Among all the gay rights battles, transgender people face the most discrimination and suffer the most adverse economic consequences, according to studies. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

By John Luciew | jluciew@pennlive.com

Want to feel the swift hand slap of discrimination and the sting of devastating economic consequences? Go from living your life as a man to coming out as a woman.

Perhaps no other group experiences the level of overt discrimination and direct adverse economic setbacks as do transgender people. And it all begins when they come out.

"These people are facing a tremendous amount of discrimination and economic pressure," said Jeanine Ruhsam, president of TransCentralPA Transgender Education Association, an LGBT Center of Pennsylvania board member and a transgender person.

'Fragile World' continued on Page 6....

What's Your Story?

Come share yours at our August 10th Meeting at 8:30 pm at the MCC of the Spirit in Harrisburg. Alexis Lake, licensed therapist, will moderate the discussion and has chosen the two questions below to focus the conversation. But don't hold us in suspense...we'd love to hear it before the meeting, so email us at Discussion@TransCentralPA.org to share your story

1. **Wherever you are on the gender/presentation spectrum, what was it that made you decide you had to do something, or to tell someone?**
2. **If you have told a loved one your truth how did you decide who, when, where, and how to tell?**

This past week at the 2013 National Business and Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce won top honors as the Chamber of the Year [see [article on page 3](#)]. Our chamber is now held up as a role model for other chambers and serves as an example of what an LGBT chamber or business organization should be. TransCentralPA proudly shares in this great accomplishment, for we have been a member of the CPGLCC for several years and regularly take part in many of its events.

From the President



Jeanine Ruhsam

As your President- and very often the lone member of our association to attend the monthly networking mixers—I have personally benefitted from participating in Chamber activities, met many positive, good people and I urge more of you to become involved. That transgender people suffer the greatest amount of workplace discrimination and have the highest rate of unemployment across the LGBT spectrum is all too well documented and known. Our immediate community is rife with tales of job loss and abuse from employers and fellow workers in the workplace. One way out of this predicament is to be more proactive. The CPGLCC is focused on one thing: business. In particular, it is focused on the welfare and success of all its members and all those LGBT people in the central Pennsylvania business community. That’s why TransCentralPA joined the Chamber—to give our members access to the resources and strong support of an organization that is now recognized as America’s best.

This month TransCentralPA is sponsoring the August business mixer at the model home of my own business, Ruhsam Building & Design, Ltd. This event offers a great opportunity for those of you who wish to meet and participate with the local LGBT and allied business community—whether to promote your own job skills, to seek support for your entrepreneurial ideas and goals or to stand up as representatives of our organization. At the August 29th mixer, the Chamber’s admission fee is waived for current members of TransCentralPA (\$10 for non-TransCentralPA members). For more information, please email us at info@TransCentralPA.org.

Warm regards,

Jeanine Ruhsam

Calendar of Events

Bold text are TransCentralPA sponsored

Aug 7	Common Roads —Safe Space Harrisburg, PA
Aug 8	Common Roads —Safe Space Carlisle, PA
Aug 8	The Curve York, PA
Aug 9	Common Roads —Safe Space Lancaster, PA
Aug 10	TransCentral PA Dinner @ Bricco Meeting @ MCC Of The Spirit After Hours @ Stocks
Aug 14	Common Roads —Safe Space Harrisburg, PA
Aug 15	Common Roads —Safe Space Carlisle, PA
Aug 16	Common Roads —Safe Space Lancaster, PA
Aug 17	Laptop Lounge King Of Prussia, PA
Aug 18	Camp Highlight Wernersville, PA
Aug 21	Common Roads —Safe Space Harrisburg, PA
Aug 22	Common Roads —Safe Space Carlisle, PA
Aug 23	The Curve York, PA
Aug 23	Common Roads —Safe Space Lancaster, PA
Aug 24	ROSE York, PA
Aug 24	Tranquility Support Group Baltimore, MD
Aug 28	Common Roads —Safe Space Harrisburg, PA
Aug 29	CPGLCC Business Mixer Wellsville PA
Aug 29	Common Roads —Safe Space Carlisle, PA
Aug 30	Common Roads —Safe Space Lancaster, PA
Sep 4	Southern Comfort Conference Atlanta, GA

Dates Continued on page 3...

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

Upcoming Business Networking Mixer



Central Pennsylvania
Gay and Lesbian
Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, August 29, 2013
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Location:

Ruhsam Building & Design, Ltd.
Award-Winning Home
1780 Pinetown Road,
Wellsville PA 17365

CPGLCC Members: Free
Prospective Members: \$10

Bring your business cards and 30 second elevator speech. Business dress requested. For additional information or to register, go to www.cpglcc.org

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

- [Shanel Sherese: From drag stage to big screen](#)
- [PA Voter ID trial starts](#)
- [WATCH: A Trans Veteran Explains Why We Need ENDA](#)
- [Trans woman stabbed to death, suspect arrested](#)
- [Diamond Williams, Trans Woman Murdered in Philadelphia, Memorialized At Vigil](#)
- [Gay PA Man, 65, Adopts His Partner, 73, To Bypass State Laws Restricting Marital Benefits](#)
- [New Laws Spell Disaster for Queers in Russia](#)
- [Obama Administration: Require Health Insurance Providers to Cover Sex Reassignment Surgery](#)
- [Columnist Taylor Named LGBT Episcopal Advocacy Group Head](#)

Congratulations!



NGLCC Names Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce as 2013 Chamber of The Year

Washington, D.C. (07/18/2013) – The National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) will be recognizing excellence in local chambers two weeks from today at the 2013 National Business & Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas. Top honors will be going to the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CPGLCC), which won 2013 Chamber of the Year.

Each year, the Chamber of the Year is seen as a role model for other chambers and an example of what an LGBT chamber or business organization should be.

"CPGLCC has transformed tremendously over this past year," said Justin Nelson, NGLCC Co-Founder and President. "President Deb McClain and her dedicated board have really continued their work to partner with major corporations, develop educational programming, and promote national LGBT business certification. The dedication of their team never fails to impress us."

Calendar of Events

Continued from page 2

Sep 4	Common Roads —Safe Space Harrisburg, PA
Sep 5	Women's Group Meeting Harrisburg, PA
Sep 5	Common Roads —Safe Space Carlisle, PA
Sep 5	The Curve York, PA
Sep 6	Common Roads —Safe Space Lancaster, PA
Sep 7	TGEA Meeting Virginia
Sep 7	Laptop Lounge King Of Prussia, PA
Sep 11	Common Roads —Safe Space Harrisburg, PA
Sep 12	Common Roads —Safe Space Carlisle, PA
Sep 13	Common Roads —Safe Space Lancaster, PA
Sep 13	NoVA MCC —Gender Support Fairfax, VA
Sep 14	TransCentral PA Dinner @ TBD Meeting @ MCC Of The Spirit After Hours @ Stocks
Sep 17	PFLAG York, PA
Sep 18	Common Roads —Safe Space Harrisburg, PA
Sep 19	Common Roads —Safe Space Carlisle, PA
Sep 19	The Curve York, PA
Sep 20	Common Roads —Safe Space Lancaster, PA
Sep 21	Laptop Lounge King Of Prussia, PA
Oct 12	Translating Identity Conference Burlington, VT
Oct 20	Fantasia Fair Provincetown, MA
Nov 6	Beauty at the Beach Rehoboth Beach, DE

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

Birthday to Anita Fo., Steffie Ly., Seleena Ka., Lisa Em., Cecilia Sw., Michelle, Cr., Robyn He., Jennifer Mc., Wendy Sw., Katie Wa., Trina Br., Crystal Th., Sharon Wa. and Carol Wi. Happy Birthday!

2013 Membership Dues are a one-time annual fee of \$20. Spouses or SOs are \$10 for the year. Dues are used to pay for meeting space, program literature, our website and our affiliation with and support of community groups and activities such as Common Roads, the Community Center, Central Pennsylvania Pride, etc. Please continue to support our organization and efforts by joining or renewing your membership—we are making a difference!

2014 Keystone Conference—It's Official! We've renewed the contract with the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel as the host hotel for the 2014 Keystone Conference. Mark the date now: March 26th-30th. To make your room reservations, please visit www.keystone-conference.org for more information.

Red Roof Inn Discount We have negotiated a rate of \$42.99/night for 2013 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 are also offering a special price for their Business King suites, too. Ask for details.

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



JOIN US FOR FAB 2013

A NIGHT OF GLAMOUR TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF COMMON ROADS

The Fall Achievement Benefit (FAB) is Central Pennsylvania's premier gala fundraiser of the LGBT Community Center Coalition! Make sure to be part of this special evening! TransCentralPA was honored last year and the first organization to receive the award.

Tickets are \$125 or \$100 if you order before 10/1/13—[CLICK HERE](#) to order your tickets today!

FAB 2013 will take place on November 9th at the

Hilton Harrisburg
1 North 2nd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

The festivities begin at 6:30pm with a cocktail hour, featuring delectable passed hors d'oeuvres. Explore the fantastic silent auction and bid on beautiful art, delightful dinners, and fantastic adventures! Grab a drink from the cash bar and mingle with the crowd. At 7:30, the doors open into the ballroom and Executive Director Louie Marven will greet you. Black tie optional.

Come celebrate the FAB award honorees including a special award to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of COMMON ROADS! [Get your tickets today!](#)



TRUTH, RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR LIVES TRANSITIONS

*Transgender Support Group for
Spouses, Significant Others and Family*

<http://www.SignificantOtherPA.org>

contact us at: info@significantotherpa.org



We Can Help

Let's Talk

Introducing THE TREE HOUSE at Alder Health



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth account for up to 40% of homeless youth throughout the United States. Many LGBT Youth are forced or asked to leave their homes as a result of their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity. As a result many young people are left with nowhere to turn and are living on the streets doing what they can to survive.

With no place to live, with the possibility (or the reality) of losing family and friends and often without community support, homeless LGBT face tremendous challenges in their efforts to find their way, to access health and wellness services, to chart a course for their lives and to emerge as strong, productive leaders in our community.

During the past year, Alder Health received multiple reports and requests from organizations working with homeless youth. The Agency recognized the need in the community for services and support for homeless LGBT youth (18 to 24) in our region and the tremendous impact homelessness and their individual experiences has upon the short-term and long-term health of LGBT youth. As a result, Alder Health Services has launched The Tree House at Alder Health.

In its infancy, the program will work to include shelter, support and longer term transitional housing to support LGBT youth in our community as they determine the desired direction for their lives. The plans for the Tree House program include access to health care, mental health services, education and life skills training program all provided according to the self-determined goals established by the program participant.

Donald Anklam has joined Alder Health Services as the Director of The Tree House Project. To learn more about The Tree House or become involved as the project takes shape please e-mail Donald@AlderHealth.org or call 1.800.867.1550.



The LGBT Center's Women's Group meets on the first Thursdays of each month from 7-9 pm. The group is an open space for women of all backgrounds and identities. Activities are facilitated by participants, and all are welcome to suggest programmatic ideas.



Summer!

The Alder Health Services Out and Active Guide for Summer 2013 (July to September) includes a wide variety of programs, activities and workshops that allow you to learn more about yourself, your health and your community. Programs range from an opportunity to try four different kinds of Yoga, to the ability to join Alder Health's Running Club or participate in a workshop about your health! Check out the full Out and Active Guide by visiting [here](#).

...‘Fragile World’ from Page 1

“And why is this?” Ruhsam asked rhetorically. “It is just incredible discrimination against these people for their gender nonconformity.”

And within the transgender community, no one suffers this kind discrimination and its resulting economic hardships more than transgender women — biological men who identify, come out and live as women.

“We live in a patriarchal culture,” said Ruhsam, who is a transgender woman. “So as a group, you are going to find gay men doing better than the lesbian community. And behind them, the trans community is lagging well behind the gay and lesbian community.”

And with no laws in Pennsylvania protecting against employment and housing discrimination based on gender identity, expression and orientation, transgender people — and most especially transgender women — have been summarily “fired, demoted and discriminated against,” Ruhsam said.

And there is very little anyone can do about it.

“Trans women are in trouble,” said Ruhsam, who hears the torment at monthly transgender support groups she attends and helps lead.

“I could tell you stories, and it’s just amazing,” she added. “And they happen weekly. A lot of our people are crashing and burning. It is not about taking hormones and being happy in your new gender. It is being rejected by society, and even your own family and friends.”

Yet, not to come out and identify with what they feel as their true gender would be to deny their own sense of self, their very existence as human beings. So transgender people do it, and they suffer the consequences.

“Trans people are in this odd little place,” Ruhsam said. “How we see ourselves in the world is at opposite ends from the physical sex we were born with. But we can’t take getting split in half.”

Ironically, the same-sex marriage issue that is all the rage in gay rights is most remote to the lives of transgender people. Many are mar-

ried to an opposite sex partner before they come out.

But once they transition to what they believe is their true gender, often everything they have built, including their relationships, begins to crumble. And most of destruction does not come from ramifications from inside their lives and relationships, but rather from the relentless discrimination they, their partners and their families face from outside.

“Trans people tend more likely to be married once,” Ruhsam said. “But once we change legal (gender) status, does my marriage change? Is my marriage now invalid? That will come up. So (the Defense of Marriage Act) does mean something to us. But we’re all about just trying to survive. And based on what has happened to this community, you don’t think about marriage when you are struggling to survive, period.”

This is not hyperbole.

An astounding 41 percent of the transgender community attempts suicide, compared with 1.6 percent of population, according to a study called the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. Nearly 6,500 transgender people participated in the wide-ranging and revealing study.

The researchers also found extreme poverty: Transgender people were four times more likely to have household incomes of \$10,000 or less vs. the general population as a whole.

And while just about 20 percent to 25 percent of transgender people undergo some form of gender reassignment surgery, the community requires specialized medical attention as many are on hormone therapy.

But without medical benefits — and with few doctors adroit at these specialized treatment requirements — transgender people often go without proper care, said Philip K. Goropoulos, president and CEO of Alder Health Services in Harrisburg, which offers sliding rate health care to many in the gay, lesbian and transgender community.

“We’ve seen a lot of transgender people who were making a very, very good living before they came out who lost everything,” said Goropoulos.

“And not because they lost their skills overnight.”

Ironically, transgender men — those biological women who identify and come out to live as men — sometimes see the reverse. Their employment prospects and financial standing can actually increase as men, Ruhsam said.

“The great loss of income is among trans women,” she said. “Most trans men have moved up in the world. They are regarded as men, and there is less discrimination against them. We need to do that study.”

Indeed, a lot of things are needed in this community. But most of all, it is state legislation, such as House Bill 300, that would end employment, housing and public accommodations discrimination based on gender identity, expression and orientation, Ruhsam said.

“It’s stigma, discrimination and insecurity,” she said of the societal and financial hurdles facing her community.

“Without any protections in place, there is a loss of earnings that most trans persons undergo,” Ruhsam explained. “A large percentages of existing marriages fail when the trans partners makes the full change. And a lot of that is the stigma and the discrimination.”

In other words, the transgender community remains in crisis. And the root cause is legislated inequality and legal discrimination that begets enormous financial pressures that grind down transgender people and their families.

“These are people who are discriminated against solely because they are gender nonconforming,” Ruhsam said. “So we all become caretakers. We are providing support to fragile people who are just barely clinging to life and sanity.”

Look for more posts laying out the economic costs of gay inequality, along with personal stories of gays who tell of the price they paid when they came out.

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