

ETVC Channel

April 1998

Volume 17, Issue 2

Coronation Gala 1998:

ETVC Attends San Francisco's Imperial Court



SF's New Emperor and Empress received their crowns at this year's coronation, while our ETVC royalty were in attendance

(Photos By Telzey Adams)

ETVC Participates In SF's Imperial Shindig

Congratulations to the San Francisco Imperial Court's dazzling new Empress, Alexis Miranda, and her dazzling escort, Emperor Fred Lewis!

This regal pair were popularly elected as heads of the San Francisco Court system during balloting on February 14, and formally installed as the city's new Imperial majesties during a flawless coronation on February 21.

ETVC made its presence known at the imperial shindig by attending the coronation in numbers and also participating in the graveside ceremony in the memory of Emperor Norton I and his "widow," Empress Jose — the founder of the Imperial Court system that exists today.



Our girls were also present at Emperor Norton's gravesite again this year in celebration of the life and times of the fabled San Francisco character and his "widow," Empress Jose. In keeping with a recent tradition, ETVC members served as "vestal virgins" during the graveside ceremonies.

(Photo By Telzey Adams)

THE CHANNEL

ETVC Inc., a non-profit corporation, is a non-sexual, membership based organization serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of gender-challenged people, their spouses, significant others, family members, friends, and professionals in the helping services. For details about ETVC programs, membership, article submission guidelines and classified ads, please write to: ETVC Secretary, P.O. Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486. Minutes of all ETVC committee meetings are available to members on request.

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Vice-President: Leslie [REDACTED]
Secretary: Veronica Smith
Treasurer: Lisa [REDACTED]
Education: Nancy [REDACTED], Juana Smith
Outreach: Telzey Adams, Sandra [REDACTED]
Social: Darcy Leopard, Evette [REDACTED]

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership (as of 2/08/98) 311
Total 1997 Membership 349
New Memberships this year 69

TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Balance as of 2/08/98 \$4,140
The "Home for ETVC" fund is now \$2017.50

ETVC is a non-profit corporation.

Donations to ETVC are TAX DEDUCTIBLE on both Federal and California income tax returns. Talk to your tax advisor for details.

Channel, the ETVC Newsletter, is published monthly. Submissions should arrive at ETVC by the 20th day of the month preceding publication. Contents reflect the opinions of the contributors and the editor, and are not necessarily those of ETVC. Other organizations may reprint or reproduce uncopyrighted portions of the newsletter for their members, provided ETVC is acknowledged as the source of the material. Copyrighted materials may be reproduced only with written permission of ETVC.

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Letter From
Elizabeth



By Elizabeth
[REDACTED]

Spring Cleaning : Running Down Some Odds and Ends

For those of you who might not have noticed, we are still in transition here at ETVC — some of us in more ways than one!

For one thing, our computer bulletin board system and voice mail operation will be closing down when the current member year ends in May. Both services have been severely under utilized and were costing us a considerable amount to maintain.

For another, the member option of having the Channel mailed first class rather than bulk rate is also going by the boards with the end of the member year. The reason for this is self-evident: since the Channel is no longer being mailed out at anything but the first class rate, a member who pays extra for this privilege would not be receiving any additional value for their additional outlay.

Finally, Channel advertising rates are — well, changing. Our per month ad rates will remain the same as they currently are, but the yearly ad rate — which purchased space in six bi-monthly issues — is now simply a six-issue ad rate, while a full year's worth of advertising space will cost twice that. The principal here is equally simply: Back before we went monthly, a year contract bought you only six insertions. Now a year contract will buy twelve insertions, so it will cost twice as much.

We had considered changing our per month rate as well, but decided that we would wait for a while before taking that step in order to see whether it is really warranted.

This issue of the Channel also is four pages shorter than those we have been running, partially because some of our regular contributors are busy preparing for California Dreamin' at the end of the month. If you have not finalized your plans to attend this truly life-altering event, please do so now. This year's presenters and vendors will be fantastic, and the variety of seminars and panel sessions — not to mention the many opportunities to socialize — will make it a once in a lifetime experience not to be missed.

Some of our own folks will be among the presenters this year, including former ETVC President Jane Bolig, Current Vice President Leslie [REDACTED], Secretary Veronica Smith, and Education Co-Chairs Nancy [REDACTED] and Juana Smith (Veronica's better half!). In addition, some of our favorite friends are expected to make presentations, including Wilhelmina Beins, Corset Czarina Ann Grogan, Lin Fraser, Makeup Master Extraordinaire Bill Jones and Cyber-Publisher JoAnn Roberts.

See you at the Golden Gateway Holiday Inn at 1500 Van Ness Avenue April 30-May 3!

SRS Examined Closely

By Sandra [REDACTED]

The crowd of more than seventy that braved the rain to attend the seminar on SRS at Kimo's on February 8th is the largest ever for an ETVC Seminar. The featured speaker for this event was Dr. Eugene Schrang, who came all the way from Wisconsin at his own expense to give his presentation of the intricate details of sexual reassignment surgery. Dr. Schrang has performed this complicated surgery for hundreds of male-to-female patients ranging in age from 15 to 70 years.

Operating at the Theda Clark Medical Center in Neenah, Wisconsin, Dr. Schrang performs a number of surgical processes to bring our bodies in line with our female gender identity. He works from the top down; in a single visit to the operating room, it is possible to obtain a rhinoplasty and other facial surgery, breast augmentation, and finally the all-important genital surgery. Very few of us feel we get enough breast development from hormone treatment; to alleviate this problem, Dr. Schrang prefers to insert implants under the muscle through an incision made beneath the breasts to minimize scarring. He uses the penile inversion method for reassignment surgery; this usually requires an additional skin graft from the hip or abdomen to attain adequate depth. For the best results, electrolysis is recommended in the scrotal area before the surgery.

In his extensive slide presentation, Dr. Schrang revealed the details of his work. He also showed some botched cases performed by other doctors; these are usually more difficult to correct than it would be to start over if this is even possible.

In performing the reassignment surgery, Dr. Schrang strives to achieve three important goals. First, he seeks results that look feminine, complete with exposed mucosa like a genetic female. Next, he creates a neo-vagina with the proper shape and depth to function like a female. Finally, he takes great care to preserve all the nerves needed for sensual feeling. The sensitive glans (head of the) penis is used in the construction of a clitoris. As in genetic females, achieving orgasm is not guaranteed, but this is possible in all but a small fraction of his patients. For more authentic results, Dr. Schrang can perform a labiaplasty to construct a labia minora and a clitoral hood as a secondary procedure about three months after the initial surgery.

Because of the risk to himself and his medical staff, Dr. Schrang does not perform surgery on patients infected with hepatitis or HIV. He cautions overweight patients that their risk during the surgery is increased since the blood supply to the needed tissue is restricted. Postsurgical problems that can develop include a rectal-vaginal fistula where the wall between the two cavities breaks down; and closing of the neo-vagina, especially if adequate dilation is not performed in the months following surgery.

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The Diablo Valley Girls (DVG)
The Rainbow Gender Association (RGA)
FtM International

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Or Call (714) [REDACTED] [Leave Message]

E-Mail - [REDACTED] or
[REDACTED] or

visit our website:

<http://www.flash.net/~dhome/cadreamin>

Special Events

DVG Fashion Show Sunday April 5

Our sisters at DVG are hosting a special fashion show at Elisabeth's in the mysterious East Bay, just early enough to provide some new outfits for California Dreamin'. As a special inducement, the management of the store is offering a 10 percent discount on items purchased during the event. At Elisabeth's, 1520 Stoneridge Mall, Pleasanton, 6:30 p.m.



One of our favorite members, Joann, shows off her winning smile and style.

(Photo by the Smith Family Photo Factory)

Mid-Month, Get-Together Wednesday, April 8th

Tax time got you down? Thinking of all those deductions you failed to deduce? Don't worry — be happy! Join us for an evening of revelry and good natured badinage at Goat Hill's most popular TG hang-out: Lilo Lounge, 18th and Connecticut streets, San Francisco, 8:30 p.m. No charge.

Special Saturday Social Wednesday, April 18th

An open invitation for all TG girls to party at the GirlSpot Club! This is a lesbian club that has a history of welcoming cross-dressers. Huge space, great dance floor, and a nice, back patio. See you there! The End Up, 6th and Harrison Streets, San Francisco.

Special End of Month Social Thursday, April 30th

Join us at the Golden Gateway Holiday Inn for a special end of month social that will be part of "California Dreamin'," the three day gender extravaganza. Hors d'oeuvres will be served. 1500 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. Members \$8, Guests \$10.

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Other Groups

Pacific Center for Human Growth, a counseling oriented growth center sponsors all- inclusive gender support groups on every Friday at 8:00 PM, 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, Call: (510) [REDACTED].

Rainbow Gender Association (RGA) meets 1st and 3rd Friday of the month 8:00 PM at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. Write: RGA, P.O.Box 700730, San Jose, CA 95170. Call: (408) [REDACTED].

Sacramento Gender Association (SGA) Blue Rose Chapter meets 8PM the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month in Sacramento. Write P.O. Box 215456, Sacramento, CA 95821-1456. Call: (916) [REDACTED] for meeting locations.

Diablo Valley Girls (DVG) Meets first and third Monday of every month. 8 PM at Just Rewards Nightclub, 2520 Camino Diablo in Walnut Creek. Write: DVG, P.O. Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885. Call: (510) [REDACTED].

DVG Rap Group (RCC) meets first and third Thursday of every month, 7 PM at Rainbow Community Center, 2637 Pleasant Hill Rd. at Taylor Blvd. in Pleasant Hill. For more info, call (510) [REDACTED].

FTM, a support group for Female-to-Male cross dressers & transsexuals, holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write FTM International, Inc., 1360 Mission St, Suite 200, SF94103 or call Voice Mail (415) [REDACTED].

TGIF (TransGenderism is Fun), a social group for transgenders, meets one Saturday each month at a pri-

TV/TS/TG

Groups and Activities

02	DVG	RCC Rap	Meets at 7 PM	Pleasant Hill	(510)
03	RGA	Social	Starts at 8 PM	San Jose	(408)
03	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets at 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)
05	DVG	Fashions	Starts at 6:30 PM	Pleasanton	(510)
06	DVG	Social	Starts at 8 PM	Walnut Creek	(510)
08	ETVC	Mid-Month	Starts at 8:30 PM	Lilo Lounge	(415)
10	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)
10	SVGA	Support Grp	Meets at 7 PM	San Jose	(408)
10	ETVC	Poker	Starts at 8 PM	SF	(415)
11	FWW	Meeting	Starts at 8 PM	Eureka	(707)
10	ETVC	Library	Hours: 7-10 PM	SF	(415)
11	ETVC	Bowling	Starts at 8:30 PM	SF	(415)
11	SGA	Social	Starts at 7:30 PM	Sacramento	(916)
12	FTM	Info Mtg	Meets at 2 PM	SF	(415)
16	DVG	RCC Rap	Meets at 7 PM	Pleasant Hill	(510)
17	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets at 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)
17	RGA	Social	Starts at 8 PM	San Jose	(408)
18	ETVC	Girl Spot	Starts at ?	End Up, SF	(415)
20	DVG	Social	Starts at 8 PM	Walnut Creek	(510)
24	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)
24	SVGA	Support Grp	Meets at 7 PM	San Jose	(408)
25	SGA	Social	Starts at 7:30 PM	Sacramento	(916)
25	FWW	Meeting	Starts at 8 PM	Eureka	(707)
30	ETVC	EOM Social	Starts at 8 PM	SF	(415)

vate home in Santa Rosa for a potluck social from 4 PM until early evening. For dates, location and reservations, call Diane or Anne at (707) [REDACTED].

Silicon Valley Gender Association(SVGA), a new transgender support group meets at the Billy De Frank Community Center in San Jose on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 7PM to 9PM. For more info, call (408) [REDACTED].

Far West Women (FWW), a support group for TGs affiliated with the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance in Humboldt Co., meets every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the Month at 8 PM in the GLBTA Center

ETVC Membership Application

Please Print

Mailing Name: _____
 Mailing Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Preferred Name: _____ Family Member's Name: _____
 (If Applicable)
 Birth Date: Month _____ Day _____ New Member: _____ Renewal: _____
 How did you learn about ETVC? _____

Full year membership June 1 - May 31 is \$25.00 (Family - \$35.00).

Please remit by check or money order to:
 ETVC, P.O. Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486



Sandra Reaches Out

By Sandra [REDACTED]

The current and correct address for the ETVC web site is:

<http://www.transgender.org/tg/etvc>

I regret reporting a preliminary address, which contained an error in my last column.

We are committed to support for the above address for the foreseeable future. We appreciate the dedicated efforts of our webmaster Q of recent Cotillion fame, and of all who have helped to make this a reality. We still need to work on expanding the contents; please check it out, and let us know what you would like to see on the site.

The time to renew your ETVC membership is drawing near. This is very important to all of us. It's only a small amount for each member, but support from all of you will enable us to continue to provide the badly needed services we sometimes take for granted. The dues have increased slightly, but not without a dramatic increase in service. We expect to

produce a quality newsletter sent first class to all members twice as often for the same amount we asked for first class mailing last year. To cut the cost of production, we are forced to try new means of production, which should get better with each issue. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our editor Elizabeth for making this work for us.

An ETVC speaker training class is still planned this year, but due to budget constraints this will more likely occur during the summer. This is an excellent opportunity for speakers to share their speaking experiences, and it will help prepare us for speaker requests in the fall. If you're not already on the list of speakers, please let me know your interest in participating in this program to educate the public on who we are, and share in the rewards of the positive feedback we receive from the effort.

As in previous years, June promises to be a busy time. Once again, we expect to participate in the Freedom Parade, and in the KQED pledge drive. Let me know your thoughts on how to schedule this. Volunteering to work on a night devoted to the gay community late in June has worked well previously.

Transgendered subjects continue to receive coverage in the media. An article in the February 6th issue of the highly regarded Chronicle of Higher Education features several faculty members from universities throughout the country who

(Continued on Page 9)

The Uninvited Dilemma

A Question of Gender

by

Kim Elizabeth Stuart

Research Supplement available separately.



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Sandra Reaches Out

(Continued from Page 6)

have made public transitions of their gender. The article discusses several cases of transition both from male-to-female and female-to-male subjects in a very positive light. Susan Stryker, who has addressed ETV, and is known for her 1991 transition at UC/Berkeley, is featured in the article. Regrettably, our own Diane Giles who made a similar transition was not mentioned. The article gives an email address to request a listing of publications by transgendered scholars.

Finally, watch for a rerun of the touching "Ally McBeal" episode from late last year that featured a young transsexual played by Wilson Cruz; you probably don't remember him from the highly acclaimed but rarely watched "My So-called Life."



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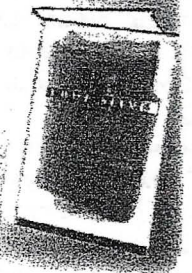
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My Adventures En Femme

By Nicole

(Editor's note: In our last issue, Nicole suggested that Channel readers who have been thinking about going out into the world en femme should act on their desire.

(She briefly described her six months of activity stepping out and told of outings that took her to TGIF socials, the ETVC Halloween Party at the Doubletree Hotel, a visit to Carla's in San Jose and an evening at the late, lamented CyberWorld Café.

(In this issue, Nicole concludes her description of her "grand tour" en femme with a trip to the wilds of the East Bay, and to the River City, Sacramento, California.)

My "tour" did not stop with ETVC events. During January I went to the Diablo Valley Girls (DVG) meeting in Walnut Creek. Here is another great bunch of gals that meet in a small nightclub.

DVG seemed to be very organized. They have a tip sheet of gender friendly places to go (something I had started to manually compile myself). The club where they meet, JR's, is in a remote-enough setting to dispel any concerns you might have about encountering people on the way in. But, by

this time, you may actually enjoy passing people on the street while heading to an event – I know that I do.

The tour now turned towards the capitol. I had no idea what I was going to encounter there. I still can't find places to go in San Francisco that provide as much fun as the outstanding time I had in Sacramento.

What I thought was the main event was the Sacramento Gender Association (SGA) meeting/dinner at Joseph's.

I am told you can go to Joseph's any time they are open in your favorite feminine outfit and have no problem whatsoever, and my experience there certainly corroborates this. We had a great dinner (as it turns out, Carla brought a group of people up from her club in San Jose that night, so the size of the group was fairly large) and socialized upstairs in the game room until about midnight.

At this point I must have turned into Cinderella, because what happened next was the coolest experience of the tour (so far). Two of the SGA members took a group of us to a nightclub called "Faces" in Sacramento.

"Faces" caters to the alternate lifestyle crowd, of which we are prominent members. There I was dancing on a crowded dance floor to great music. As I looked around I could not only see the transgendered people who came with us, but many others as well.

I felt right at home. Needless to say, I will be returning to Sacramento.

Well, that's about it for now. At the time that I am writing this article it is a few days before the ETVC Cotillion. I have plans to visit CyberWorld, Carla's for a makeover and manicure and, of course, the Cotillion. The tour has not ended. I am finding ways to schedule work around my next set of events to attend, and I am looking forward to every one of them.

I hope to see all of you soon, since once you start you can't stop.

(You can contact Nicole at [redacted]@tgforum.com)

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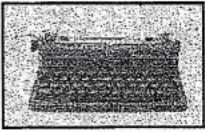
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Executive Committee Minutes

ExCom Meeting, February 8, 1998, at the Smiths. Present were President Souza, Vice President [REDACTED], Secretary Smith, Outreach Co-Chairs [REDACTED] and Adams, Education Co-Chairs [REDACTED] and Smith, and Social Co-Chair [REDACTED]. Social Co-Chair Leopard and Treasurer [REDACTED] were absent.

Madam President called meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Communications and Announcements: The *Bay Times* had a good article on the Cotillion. For the Coronation on February 21, the seats are \$40 each and 9 of 10 seats are taken at ETVC's table. It was uncertain whether Empress Jose wanted ETVC representatives at Norton's gravesite on February 22. The Goodnights will be in town on the 15th. Veronica and Juana will not be able to attend.

Minutes: Evette moved January's Minutes be approved, Nancy seconded and they were unanimously approved.

President Souza congratulated Vice President [REDACTED] and everyone connected with the Cotillion. The President was working on an analysis of Bylaw changes to be included in the ballot mailing. *Crise du jour*: In the *Bar Area Reporter* (1/22/98, p.8), Francis Vavra (Mr. ETVC '94) posted a reply to Victoria Secret's earlier letter criticizing Sandra's article (discussed in January's Minutes). Francis not only chastised Victoria Secret's perspective but also made personal critical remarks. Since Vavra signed his letter as a former Mr. ETVC, Victoria informed ETVC that the organization might be a co-defendant if she filed legal action. Victoria's attorney saw invasion of privacy and defamation as possible causes-of-action. President Souza as ETVC's official representative wrote the B.A.R. a letter, which stated: "ETVC neither advocates nor validates statements of a personal or private nature about second or third parties addressed therein." Erin would send Francis a letter expressing the ExCom's concern. It was also suggested that there be a stand-alone article in the April newsletter expressing ETVC's official confidentiality policy. Madam President reminded the ladies of the Executive Committee that nominations for 98-99 officers were due in March; it was time to contemplate returning or finding a successor. Erin announced that she was not going to run again for president and asked Leslie if she would consider the presidency. Leslie said that she was not particularly averse to that position, but wanted to maintain involvement with the Cotillion and Cotillion involvement was supposed to be the vice president's domain. Veronica said she would run for Secretary again if no one else wanted the position, but she would gladly acquiesce her position to whoever wanted it. Sandra would only run for Outreach Chair again with the agenda of pursuing membership, cutting giveaways (freelbies). She also wanted to reevaluate the Cotillion judging criteria. However, Telzey was not enthusiastic about running again, though she'd like to serve on the Outreach Committee. Evette said that she would run for Social Chair again. Juana and Nancy said they would run for Education Chairs.

Vice President Leslie reported that the Cotillion definitely was a successful production and there seemed no

criticism. Its financials are still under review. Roughly the event cost \$9000, which was less than expected. But it looked as if it brought in only a similar amount. In other words, the Cotillion did not look like a big money loser or winner. Leslie was disappointed with the number sold to the gay contingent. Mark Klein wants to do it again next year. Leslie wants to increase attendance and get sponsor money. Erin suggested reserving the Design Center for next year. One discouraging note was that there was a theft: Jennifer had her purse taken. It was found later in the bathroom minus \$50.

Secretary: Membership is 311 of which 69 are new. Veronica briefly compared this number to last February when membership was 349 (64 new). Veronica and Juana had prepared the last *Channel 2* and sent it out. It had the November and December Minutes, updates, corrections and a request for donations for the newsletter equipment. Veronica had retyped the Bylaws to incorporate Sandra's clarifications to Veronica's clarifications of Sandra's earlier clarifications. It looked as if the Bylaws were finally done. Veronica will fit them (double-sided) on three sheets of paper. The Bylaws, Erin's analysis of them, the ballots, candidate statements, and renewal letter will be sent to the membership in mid-April. Veronica asked about a dues increase. This had often been talked about before, but not decided. Before she drafted the renewal letter, she wanted to know how much she should ask for. Evette moved that individual and singular memberships be increased by five dollars. Leslie seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed. Membership to ETVC for the 1998-1999 year will be \$30 individual and \$40 for family. Family membership does not get an extra newsletter. [6:30 p.m.]

Treasurer: In lieu of the Treasurer, Erin related the present finances. Presently the balance is \$4,140 and some forthcoming expenses are \$839 for Halloween, \$600 for tax/accounting, \$200 Cotillion scenery, \$550 Cotillion program layout. And there will be other expenses.

Education: Sarah Lashes is scheduled for March. Cal Dreamin' is in April. Closet Ball conflicts with Cal Dreamin'.

Outreach: Rather than channeling the speakers' class through the Pacific Center, Sandra wants to channel it herself and make it an ETVC function at CyberWorld, the Alternative Family Center or somewhere else. The class should last three or four hours some afternoon. Sandra wants to expand the Speakers Bureau, get Outreach on the net, and find someone to work Modesto. She and Leslie will address the Castro Lyons Club. Erin asked about the Bob Davis' suggestions about seeking TG youth. Juana suggested asking Q to invite the Digital Queers to an ETVC event. Telzey asked about the telephone number on the website.

Social: Evette reported that January's social before the Cotillion was a subdued affair with only around 25-30 attendees. Veronica was concerned that CyberWorld may eventually not welcome ETVC events if it did not make enough money. Also, at the December social, someone had walked off with the tip jar. Erin asked about whether there was going to be a *Really Big Shew* this year and where would it be. Nothing was decided.

Old Business: The Standing Rules (the roles of the officers) were discussed. Veronica thought that assigning to future Secretaries the responsibility for membership, club correspondence, state filings, ExCom's Minutes, plus the newsletter production were too much for one volunteer. She did not understand why the Secretary should be responsible for the newsletter and thought that the ExCom should share that responsibility. The newsletter stuffing and mailing should be handled equally among the ExCom officers. Also, Veronica did not see why the Secretary had to write the NewsCom minutes, make copies and distribute them. The Editor always knew who was responsible for each story and, other than the ExCom, no other committee distributed minutes. The ExCom agreed that NewsCom minutes would no longer be necessary. Leslie offered to do the stuffing at her house. Since the newsletter is to be produced in the East Bay and may be copied there, perhaps it would be easier to stuff it and mail it from the East Bay as well.

New Business: Nancy [REDACTED] showed the agreement among Elizabeth [REDACTED], ETVC and herself (Nancy) as to the ownership of the equipment.

Adjournment: At 9:00 p.m. after 4 1/2 hours, Juana moved for adjournment, Leslie seconded, and everyone agreed to go home.

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Chapter 7: Signposts Along The Way

By Andrea [REDACTED]

Seeing the film *Ma Vie En Rose* brought back a lot of childhood memories. Although I was never as open as Ludo (an early lesson quite painfully learned), I always knew that I had a female personality, and I did what I could to express myself while avoiding outright censure. Upon reflection, some of these experiences are rather bittersweet, while others are quite humorous in their naiveté. The following vignettes are just a few of the signposts I passed along my path of self-discovery and self-realization.

I got my first pair of eyeglasses when I was 10. At my next exam, the optometrist remarked upon the virtually scratch-free lenses and like-new appearance of the frames, and offered me the choice of plastic lenses – a choice that he had up until then reserved exclusively for girls. I simultaneously felt exceptionally pleased with myself and absolutely terrified by the possibility that my "secret" had been discovered. I reluctantly chose the glass lenses.

In winter, the cranberry bogs near my house froze into wonderful skating rinks. I enjoyed ice skating best when I "had" to wear my sister's white figure skates instead of a pair of "boy" hockey skates. My parents couldn't afford to buy a pair for everyone, and my brothers refused to wear "girl skates". I also

played flute in the school band during sixth grade, much to my father's open displeasure. I switched to the saxophone in seventh grade.

In seventh grade, my English class read a Willa Cather novel. In one particular passage, a young boy asks a recent mother how she knew her newborn was a girl. The reply that a girl's hair parted naturally down the middle caused me to spend quite a bit of time in front of the mirror examining my hair. Yes, I was quite naïve at the time, but I almost convinced myself that I really did have a natural center part.

Junior high school was also the time when:

- * I began carrying my books from class to class in front like the girls, and maintained that it was more practical than carrying them underarm whenever I was "challenged" by the boys.

- * My sister and I shared the in-fashion clothes (genuine "bleeding" madras shirts and a tennis sweater) the same way we shared ice skates. I loved the way the shirts buttoned right over left, and the way the tennis sweater was slightly stretched out in certain places

- * Gym class lost much of its appeal when I learned that gymnastics didn't include either the balance beam or the uneven parallel bars, and that playing field hockey was out of the question.

A particularly memorable episode of the original *Star Trek* series concerns an anthropologist that believes she was denied the opportunity to command a starship because of her gender. Upon discovering an ancient alien device that can transfer personalities between two bodies, she lures Kirk into a trap and transfers herself into his body (and vice versa). Naturally, Kirk spends the rest of the episode in a desperate attempt to reclaim himself and the *Enterprise*. What I never understood was why Kirk didn't destroy the alien device so that the anthropologist could never switch him back – I certainly would have!

Passing through adolescence and early adulthood changed nothing. When I first got cable TV, the Lifetime channel quickly became my favorite because it re-ran network shows that I had previously enjoyed, like *MacGruder and Loud*. It was three months before I learned that Lifetime's target audience was women in the 18 to 35 age bracket.

These are only a few of my experiences growing up transgendered, but they are representative of what it was like for me, a female at heart, learning to deal with the world while coping with having a male body and being pressured into a male gender role. Sometimes I wish that I had had Ludo's unwavering courage when I was younger, but we can't change the past. So, I content myself with having made my transition, and look forward to a future filled with wondrous possibilities – even though I still dread the thought of having anyone cut my hair.

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On the Town

The Farallon Revisited — and Bix!

By Darcy Leopard

When chatting with my GG friend Sylvia on the phone, I had evidently been talking up the Farallon Restaurant quite a bit, the subject of a previous article of mine in which Bree and I ventured there for the first time. She caught the bug of my enthusiasm, and mentioned that she and her friend Camille were looking for an interesting place to go. She asked if Bree and I would like to meet them there for cocktails. I called up Bree about the invitation, and we set a date.

As it turned out, unfortunately, Sylvia was not feeling well when the scheduled time arrived. Something unexpected came up for Camille, so she couldn't make it either. We decided to do a foursome another time. Meanwhile, Bree and I decided we would do the Farallon again by ourselves, and also decided to check out another place we had been excited about trying.

As Bree and I cruised towards downtown, I noticed that my "cross-dressing rhythm" so to speak was a bit off. I realized it had been awhile since I was out en femme, and worried I was losing my momentum. I mentioned this feeling to Bree, and she said she felt a bit of the same. Undeterred however, we pushed on!

After arriving downtown and doing a few circles looking for parking, we finally found a space that Bree practically had to use a can-opener to squeeze into. Being an accomplished Urban Jungle Girl, she pulled it off with style, accompanied by my applause.

Upon entering The Farallon, any feelings that we had previously harbored about "losing our momentum" were instantly disintegrated. The air seemed charged with excitement, and it felt as if a magical aura had swept over us. Sharply dressed people were already turning their heads and smiling at us, and the staff was asking if we were looking for dinner seating. We were just there for cocktails, however, so we positioned ourselves next to an ornate column near the bar and ordered martinis.

After just a short while, a couple seated at the bar next to where we were standing got up to leave, and offered us their premium seats. Excited at our good fortune, we thanked our benefactors and sat down on elegant barstools covered in textured, gold leather. I pointed out to Bree that they perfectly matched my new, spike-heeled, gold lame pumps, which I was eager to show off that evening.

We had been sipping our drinks for only a short while when I felt a friendly touch on my shoulder. I turned around and saw none other than the renowned Birdy-Bob Watt, whom some of you may know as the director of ETV's 1997 "Really Big Shew". Birdy is also a very accomplished stage performer, both in drag and out, and so I wasn't exactly surprised to find her hanging out in San Francisco's theatre district.

"I saw a familiar head of big, blonde hair," she began.

"So I just had to come over and say hi!"

"You've met Birdy, haven't you Bree?" I said. "She's one of the original Trannyshack..."

I then paused, expressing a little hesitation on whether the "she" pronoun was appropriate at the moment, as Birdy was not en femme.

"Oh, it really doesn't matter," Birdy returned.

She then went on to describe how she had just been introduced to The Internet, and noted how people routinely took on alternate personas in chat rooms and such, and how this reminded her in a parallel way of cross-dressing.

"It seems like everybody's morphing right now," she concluded.

I thought about how appropriate it was that we were talking about this in the liquid ambience of The Farallon, which is the perfect setting to feel amorphous.

After Birdy departed, a young gentleman came over to flirt with us a bit. The discussion eventually led to where we were heading next, and when we told him, he gave us the names of the owner and a doorman. Bree enthusiastically took notes for future reference.

We concluded our visit to the Farallon with Bree and I taking photos of each other next to a painting of a seahorse, which sat at a table sipping a martini!

Our next destination was Bix, a very classy place tucked away on Gold Alley just North of the Financial District. As soon as we entered, Bree eagerly went to work shamelessly name-dropping.

"Is the owner Mike here?" she playfully asked the doorman.

"Never heard of the guy," the doorman answered flatly.

"Oh, are you John?"

"John's not working tonight."

So much for name-dropping. Our anonymous doorman took our coats and invited us in.

Bix is a stunning venue, with rich, dark-wood paneling adorning the walls and columns, and theatre-high ceilings brought on by the balcony of the upper-level. A huge painting covers the entire wall behind the bar, featuring a balcony view of people from a past era stepping to the dance floor.

We ordered martinis and nestled up next to a column to scope out the patrons. They consisted of an interesting mix of the after-work Financial-District crowd, upwardly mobile locals, and "Tourists in the Know." We received a few curious glances, and admired how nicely some of the ladies had dressed themselves up. I had to mention, however, that I was wearing higher heels any of them, high-heel snob that I am!

A jazz duo, consisting of a lady softly singing seductive tunes accompanied by a pianist, played just a short distance

(Continued on Page 12)

On The Town

Darcy on Farallon and Bix

(Continued from Page 11)

from us. I spotted an amazing painting across the room, and told Bree we just HAD to have a picture of it. It featured a clown and a circus girl, passionately kissing behind the tents.

As I positioned myself below the picture, some of the aforementioned "Tourists in the Know" eagerly volunteered to take a picture of both Bree and me with the painting. Then some of them posed with us for more pictures.

And so, we eventually concluded another wonderful night on the town. We wished Sylvia and Camille could have shared it with us, and I'm sure they will another time soon.

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