

TWENTY (XX Club, Inc.) Newsletter

The Transsexual Support Group of New England and New York

VOLUME I, ISSUE I

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2000

Interview with Dana Rivers

New York, N.Y. Dec. 3, 1999
Reprinted from "In your Face"

DANA RIVERS,
AN AWARD-

winning teacher at Center High School in Antelope, California, was fired from her job this fall when a right-wing legal organization in league with local religious conservatives put pressure on her local school board to 'dismiss the transsexual.'

Ms. Rivers, formerly know as David Warfield, had developed a program to encourage unmotivated students that was highly celebrated and won a prestigious grant; she won her school's 'Stand and Deliver' award for inspiring students; and, at the school district's annual meeting in September, she was given a standing ovation.

When she notified her school administration that she would be transitioning to a female role, they were supportive and sent a letter to all parents in the district informing them of her plans to transition. They received only four letters in protest.

Despite her distinguished record and the school administration's support the school board voted to dismiss Ms. Rivers. She filed a discrimination suit against the school district as local parents, concerned citizens, and, most notably, her students

rallied in her support. The news media quickly focused on her case and thrust her into the national spotlight. We interviewed her last week.

YF: You recently settled a portion of your suit against the school board. Can you talk about it?

(Cont. Pg 4)

Al Gore reported to support gender identity in ENDA

Orlando, Florida Dec. 11, 1999

Story by Diane Arnold / Edited by Melissa Phillips

Vice President Al Gore in front of 2500 screaming delegates made the following statement at the Florida State Democratic convention in Orlando. As President, "One of my first pieces of legislation that I will fight for is hate crimes legislation." Later on in his speech he stated that he will support the inclusion of gender identity in ENDA. *It has been reported that both Bill Bradley and Al Gore are seeking support from the transgendered community.* (END)

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Transsexuality may be genetic

BBC News, U.K. Dec. 15, 1999
submitted by Brenda Lana Smith

Transsexual's desire to change their sex is genetic, not psychological, according to a Swedish psychiatrist, Mikael Landen, from the University of Gothenburg. And this could be why most had much happier lives after their sex change.

Speaking to a Swedish newspaper, Dr Landen said he had discovered three genes present in transsexual males that make them less sensitive to testosterone, the male hormone that stimulates the development of the male sexual organs.

"It could explain why transsexuals cannot be cured by therapies, and why there are transsexuals in every civilisation," Dr Landen added.

In a study of 400 transsexuals, he found that nine out of 10 were happier after the operation. They had better psychiatric health and better working relations. They were also less likely to commit suicide.

The XX Club, Inc. The Transsexual Support Group of the
Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc.

Nature: The XX Club is a support group run by and for the transsexual community. Historically, The Twenty Club has close ties with the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc., but the organizations are separate. Our purpose is to provide knowledgeable information and ongoing peer support to transsexuals through the many stages of their transition as well as information about the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc. Friends and relatives are encouraged to attend in the hope of gaining a greater understanding and acceptance of their loved one's Gender Dysphoria. The XX Club is non-profit and non-sexual. We are not a religious organization and have no affiliation with any religious denomination. We hold no prejudice against any other group of people.

Services: The XX Club, Inc. publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, "TWENTY"; serving persons with Gender Dysphoria and helping professionals. We meet on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month. Meetings are structured to provide support, information and open, accepting understanding. On occasion, we have professional speakers on educational and medical subjects of interest to Gender Dysphoric persons. Additionally, we have social get-togethers, club parties, outreach to New England and New York gender organizations, and a speakers bureau. Smoking is not allowed during our meeting. Local ordinances restrict smoking to outside the building. During the course of the meeting, we enjoy a half hour break, during which people are encouraged to get to know one another and to help themselves to food and beverages. Please feel free to bring food and/or beverages to share with our group.

Security: We are a peer support group, not a dating service or an instant source of new best friends. Persons interested in attending meetings are welcome to come providing they have a personal interest in gender Dysphoria, understand the supportive nature of our group, and are willing to respect the anonymity of all persons attending. At no time may another persons name, address, telephone number, or any personal information be given out without full permission of that individual. Cameras, recording devices and members of the media are not allowed at our meetings.

Membership Dues and Meeting Fees: Annual membership dues for the XX Club, Inc. are \$20 (US) per year. Dues include a one year (6 issues) subscription to this newsletter. Members and visitors are encouraged to contribute \$1.00 per person at each meeting to help defray our expenses. Dues and meeting fees are applied to facility costs, newsletter production and distribution costs, and refreshment costs for XX Club and GICNE meetings. While these contributions allow us to remain self-sustaining, no one will be turned away due to their inability to contribute.

Twenty Club Meetings: Regular meetings of the XX Club are held the **2nd** and **4th** Saturday of each month, from 1:45 until 4:45 PM. Meetings are held at **Christ Church Cathedral (Paris House)** 45 Church St Hartford, CT 06013

THE NEWSLETTER "TWENTY"

"TWENTY" is published bi-monthly as a service of the XX Club, Inc. All original material may be reproduced with proper credit to the author and to "Twenty, the official newsletter of the XX Club, Inc." The opinions and views are not necessarily those of the XX Club, Inc.. Its' newsletter, or the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc. Articles involving medical aspects of Gender Dysphoria are not intended to be medical advice and readers are cautioned not to make any changes based upon such information without consulting a physician.

Newsletter submissions may be mailed to the XX Club at our address given on the back cover, or submitted at club meetings. Whenever possible, please submit contributions on an 3.5" diskette, Microsoft Word or WordPerfect format preferred, but any ASCII text format is acceptable. The newsletter staff reserves the right to print only submissions of relevance to the transsexual community. Due to various constraints, submissions may not be printed immediately. The newsletter cannot be responsible for returning submitted materials. When submitting contributions, clearly state what personal information you want or do not want to include with your article. Contributors personal information will remain confidential. Be sure to credit any source appropriately. Photographs must be accompanied by a signed release from all individuals shown. The staff appreciates all contributors. All material will be considered for publication.

Letter from

Greetings from Melissa Phillips, the new editor of "TWENTY." I originally met Canon Jones back in the summer of 1989, though I didn't begin my transition with GICNE until early 1996. Some of you may know of me, and others may have either seen me at the few XX Club meetings I have attended, or at Dr. Higgins office.

I live in SE Massachusetts (about 2 hours from Hartford), and have relied on the newsletter to keep me updated on news & information happening within our community, and the XX Club.

Transsexual persons by their very nature are usually quite vulnerable. We potentially face any number of social problems, including but not limited to family, wives/husbands, children, employment, religion and substance abuse. Last time I checked those are pretty heavy issues for anyone to bear.

My philosophy as editor of "TWENTY" will be to provide interesting light reading and credible information. I will do my best to publish at least 1-interview, 1-science, 1-political, 1-community, and 1-light hearted story in every issue. The newsletter is intended to be a link to the TS community. If you come across something that you think is news worthy, or if you would like to write an editorial, please submit that by the information provided on page 2, and the back page of this newsletter.

I would like to give credit and thanks to Penni Ashe from Gender Advocacy Internet News (GAIN), a free Internet news service <http://www.gender.org/gain/>. Penni is also co-chair of ITA, "It's Time America", and is director of "It's Time Massachusetts. She is also on the board of directors for GEA, Gender Education and Advocacy, (a national organization). She and these groups will be my main source of information, so I hope to keep you well-informed, with good credible news, information and education.

Lastly I would like to thank the President of the XX Club, Michelle Hendricks, for giving me the opportunity to be the newsletter editor. For all the support & understanding that XX has offered, I was thrilled to be able to give something back to the XX Club. I'm looking forward to an interesting ride!

Respectfully,

Melissa Phillips

XX Club Calendar

XX Happenings:

I would like to ask if there is a member that would like to take the minutes of the meetings. There will always be some members that can not make it to all the meetings. And, since this is a support group, I feel that it is important to keep **all** of our members current with XX Club news and events.

Thank You,
Melissa

Meetings:

Saturday - January 8, 2000
 Saturday - January 22, 2000
 Saturday - February 12, 2000
 Saturday - February 26, 2000

Interview with Dana Rivers

Continued from Page 1

DR: I settled the dismissal portion of my case with my employer, Center Unified School District. I agreed to a buy-out worth \$150,000. They agreed to drop all charges against me and expunge my record of all reference to my dismissal. They also agreed to use only my new name in all record keeping and they agreed to support my future employment as a teacher by giving to prospective employers an accurate history of my teaching career, as well as support my efforts to keep my teaching credential. I agreed to resign from the district and not seek re-employment there.

IYF: What legal questions remain to be decided?

DR: I have two remaining legal issues. The state credential commission is doing an independent review of my case and could revoke my teaching credential. The school district is obligated under the terms of the settlement to support the retention of my credential. The issue may ultimately involve my right to free speech guaranteed under the First Amendment.

I filed a claim with the state Labor Commission charging the district with discrimination based on my gender-different status. The Labor Commissioner has opened a file and is investigating the claim. The issue here involves my 'political activity.' As a transsexual undergoing medically prescribed treatment which includes living full-time in my appropriate gender role, I had no choice but to inform my employer and colleagues about my situation. By divulging this information, I participated in a political act, which I claim is a protected activity.

IYF: On what grounds did the complaining parents and Pacific Justice Institute demand your firing?

DR: They said I spoke to students in an inappropriate manner about my transition. The elements of their claim are largely inaccurate and out of context. And besides, I would never do anything to hurt my students. The real reason they are upset is that I am gender-different. I don't fit in to their concept of what a good teacher is. No matter what I did or didn't do last spring, these people would still not want me teaching. I should point out that it was no accident that I became a target of the PJI. They are on a 'seek and destroy' mission with regard to trans- gender teachers and public employees. They also seek to do the same to lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. Theirs is part of an organized campaign to eliminate queer people from education. The community where I teach was ready to accept me. Four complaints came into the district when my transition was announced to the parents of over 5,500 students. The board originally voted to keep me. But when the PJI rode into town, everything changed. We saw a

document given to the school board by the PJI that threatened the board with lawsuits if they did not try to fire me.

IYF: In your opinion, what were the motives of the protesting parents? The PJI?

DR: I believe they think there is no place in our society for gender difference. They spew hate- based rhetoric under the guise of religion and seek to destroy our very means of economic survival. Their tactics are morbid, in that they want me out of the workplace, so I can't earn a living, so I literally shrivel up as a member of society. Having me dismissed is their version of burning me at the stake.

IYF: Tell us about the May letter you wrote that has become a point of contention.

DR: I wrote a letter to my colleagues explaining my situation. I gave it to everyone who works at my high school. The letter explained Gender Dysphoria and transsexuality, and my need under the Benjamin standards to live in my appropriate gender role for at least one year.

IYF: Did you discuss your transition with your students? If so, how did they react?

DR: I can't go there because of the remaining legal stuff.

IYF: Tell us about the demonstrations of support you received from students, parents, and the local community.

DR: Most of my colleagues and students were great. From the moment my situation developed, people rallied to my side. I received support from people who understood the medical nature of my condition, as well as people who felt that there should be no stigma attached to my gender-different status. Colleagues called me every day after I was put on leave to check on me. I was invited to dinner, to get my hair done, and just talk. The History department even gave me a gift certificate to a dress shop. Students could not believe the intolerance exhibited by the board majority. They went to school board meetings and challenged the adults in the room to look at the message they were sending. They called local radio stations and pleaded my case. One station, FM 102.5, took up my case and aired numerous programs devoted to the students who support me. They then held a rally on the steps of the state capitol building. Students also picketed a staff training day, and wrote letters to anyone who would listen. Through all of this, they remained respectful and mature. I am so proud of them. Their behavior is exactly what we want young people to be doing....that is, becoming citizens and speaking

on issues that effect them. Any teacher, or parent, or voter, should look at them and know that the future is in good hands.

IYF: Do you still want to teach?

DR: I am a teacher. It is in my blood. I have spoken before several college classes and I always get juiced. I love the human interaction and energy that learning provokes. I intend to take the next year and speak out about what happened to me, and why I feel our society is poised to be more accepting of gender difference. Then I will apply for a job and go teach in a school that respects my abilities and is not concerned about the shape of my body.

IYF: What are your chances of getting another teaching job in the public school?

DR: Excellent. Not only am I an award-winning teacher with years of experience, but California is in the midst of a serious teacher shortage. To be honest, I am not worried about getting another job in a public high school.

IYF: What happens now? I know that you have some speaking gigs. Do you see yourself continuing as a gender activist?

DR: I have been thrust into this role and, to be honest, I love it. It is part of who I am to be up front, candid, and in the spotlight. I do not believe that this means I am particularly vain or ego-centric. Rather, I know I am capable of speaking out, and it feels good to move the mountain. As long as people want to hear me, I am willing to spread the word. My transition thus far has been easy (yes, even though I lost my job) compared to my sisters and brothers who have faced ridi-

cule and physical harm for their gender difference. I am humbled by the effort and energy of GenderPAC and the other organizations who are trying to make a difference.

IYF: You just addressed NGLTF's 'Creating Change' in Oakland and traveled to Washington to meet with Rep. Barney Frank, among others. Tell us about your new-found high-profile status as an activist.

DR: It's been fun, a bit overwhelming, and very rewarding to have so much attention paid to my situation. I have been interviewed by newspapers and radio programs and magazines from as far away as Germany. ABC News has followed my case closely, and flew my daughter and me out to New York to be on Good Morning America. I had to secure the help of an agent to handle the flood of requests for my time. A book and movie are being considered. I actually had Diane Sawyer and a producer from Oprah Winfrey on the phone at the same time a few weeks ago. People magazine named me one of the 25 most intriguing people of 1999, and Jane magazine named me one of the Gutsiest Women of the Year. It is amazing! I hope this exposure gets our message into homes where normal people can look at me, hear or read about me, and decide for themselves if I would be a good teacher, or neighbor, or spouse. All I want out of the media attention is to raise the bar.... to make society aware of the lack of rights we who are gender-different have.

I'll take the coffee spills on my carpet and broken bathroom door that happened the day 20/20's camera crew invaded my house, if the result is more respect and a fair hearing about gender rights in this country.

(end)

Is a Louisville tree changing genders?

Louisville Courier-Journal, Dec. 2, 1999

Courtesy of "The Letter" Kentucky's transgender newspaper

For most of its adult life--now 150 years and counting--a giant ginkgo tree in Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery was presumed to be male. Thought to have been grown from seed provided by Kentucky senator Henry Clay, the tree is one of the largest known ginkgos in the world.

But in the past ten years, as it approached its dotage, it's been doing something few other ginkgo's are known to have done: sprout berries, an activity performed only by females. The prolific fruit seems to be growing from one branch--called a sport or witch's broom--about fifty feet up. Only six other ginkgos are known to have possessed both male and female traits: four at the University of Virginia in a 1982 survey, and two in the whole of Japan in a 1931 survey.

Peter Del Tredici, director of living collections at Harvard

University's Arnold Arboretum, says such gender shifts are actually not that unusual. "Maleness to femaleness is a continuum, not an absolute distinction," he notes. "Biology is much more flexible than we give it credit for." He thinks the Louisville tree may be suffering a "breakdown of communal support systems" as a result of old age.

"I think it's a cool tree," adds Lee Squires, the cemetery's superintendent.

Gingkos are among the oldest known species of trees, and one of the toughest. A ginkgo at ground zero in Hiroshima in 1945 was shattered by the first atomic bomb but sprouted leaves eighteen months later.

Dr. Sheila Kirk to retire

*Reprinted from www.tsmccenter.com,
The web address for the Transsexual Surgical
and Medical Care Center*

Tampa, FL.

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

After much thought, and in some ways struggle, I have decided to retire from active surgical and medical practice on January 1, 2000. It has been a tough decision for a person such as myself. For almost 40 years, medicine has been a big part of my life and for the last 15 years, I have dedicated myself to helping my Community through my experience as a gynecologic surgeon and endo gynecologist.

The launching of TSMC, the first Center for transgender medical and surgical services, developed by a Transsexual surgeon (for those of you involved in the debate, yes, I am transsexual and yes, I have had surgery), has brought much joy to me. It has been hard work. But it has been a labor of love and worth the long hours both in and out of the consultation office and the operating room. The immediate and strong acceptance from our Community has been very rewarding. Perhaps the single most rewarding professional situation of my life. I wish to thank all of you who had the confidence in me and came to the TSMC surgical team for your surgical and medical needs because of my involvement.

But, now it is time, to turn my focus to my private life. To regain my piano technique (many of you may not know that I am classically trained). To take master courses with pianists I have always wanted to train under. To write more poetry and to finish the novel that I have been wanting to complete for several years now. And most importantly, to spend these days with my LifePartner, Pamela, who throughout the seven years of our Union/Communion, has been by my side, working to help to improve the lives of those within our Community so desperate for good care.

Drs. Futrell and Manders will continue offering surgical services to our Community, although without my involvement or association and not within the TSMC Center. TSMC will close on January 1, 2000. Dr. Futrell's and Dr. Manders' fee schedules, policies, procedures, and guidelines may not remain the same as they were under the TSMC Center.

It has always been very important to me to reach people, touch them and give them the best I know how to give. Throughout the years of my work within our Community and especially through the TSMC Center, so many of you have showed me proof-positive that such contact can be made and can be most rewarding to those receiving it and those giving it.

Peace & Light
Sheila Kirk, M.D.

Nash Bridges; The TV show, does it again

*Reprinted with permission from GAIN,
Gender Advocacy Internet News
Edited by Melissa Phillips*

In its first two seasons, Nash Bridges, produced by and starring Don Johnson, had one episode each season featuring RuPaul as the guest star and with a transgender theme to the main story line. On Friday, December 17, Nash Bridges once again had a transgender character in the storyline, though one could have missed it easily. In the show's sub-story line, Nash's partner, Joe Dominguez (SP?), is hired to track down a client's son, kidnapped several years earlier.

The trail crosses paths with an attractive woman who knew the son. As it turns out, the woman is the son, post-SRS. She asks Dominguez and his partner in the investigation to please respect the anonymity she has built since her transition. Dominguez tells the father that his son is dead. *Nash Bridges* airs *Friday's at 10 pm, on CBS.*

Transgendered activists say Community lives in fear of violence

by Nick Napolitano / Edited by Melissa Phillips

Transgendered activists across America say they are alarmed by a yearlong upswing of violent acts committed against transgendered people, claiming at least 12 lives in the past 12 months. The most recent victim was prominent transgender activist Tacy Raino Ranta of It's Time, Maryland!, who was slain in Baltimore during a crime spree that began the night of Nov. 22, 1999 and ran into the early hours of Nov. 23.

"It's like being in a horror movie, and all your friends around you are being murdered and no one notices," San Francisco transgender community historian Candice Brown Elliott told the Blade. "That's what our lives are like." Using estimates on the number of transgendered people living in the country, as well as FBI statistics, Elliott, who teaches "Transhistory" at the Harvey Milk Institute, estimated that transgendered people living in America today have a 1 in 12 chance of being murdered in their lifetime.

Elliott also cited an unpublished study which claims that only 1 out of every 17 male-to-female transsexuals weds after transition, which she said indicates that there is a greater chance for them to be murdered than get married.

"We are considered disposable people in this society," observed Clare Howell, a transgendered activist living in Brooklyn.

Murders of transgendered people have been reported in the states of California, Illinois, Georgia, Ohio, Florida, Massachusetts, and New Jersey in the last year alone.

(END)

Discovering intersex people

Reprinted from GAIN
Edited by Melissa Phillips

The January edition of Discover features a lengthy, well-written article about intersexuality by Emily Nussbaum. It details how being born with ambiguous genitals affects the person, how families react and procedures followed by the medical community. It starts: "Meet Emma, one of 65,000 babies born each

year neither male nor female. Once surgeons made them into females. Now parents wonder if these infants shouldn't be left untouched."

Nussbaum writes about her reaction to doing the story: "It's a habit to divide people into men and women in your mind, but this story made me hyperaware of how illusory people's gender is."

Questions of gender identity and sexual orientation are brought up in the article and society's reaction to those who do not fit into clear gender categories is considered. Although not mentioned specifically, the article provides a possible explanation for transgender people when it goes into the sex-determining role of chromosomes and hormones: how the two working together do not always produce absolute male or absolute female humans.

(END)

Internet Startup Hires Drag Queen

PALO ALTO, Calif. (Reuters)
Edited by Melissa Phillips

What's a dot-com to do to rise above all the hype that lingers over Internet start-ups like bad cologne?

Hire RuPaul, of course.

In Silicon Valley, where hundreds of millions of dollars of venture capital are chasing too few good ideas, start-ups are known for brash, off-the-wall advertising to lure customers. But this may be the first time an Internet start-up has hired a 7-foot-tall drag queen to attention to itself.

WebEx said RuPaul will be the company's official celebrity spokesperson in a nationwide advertising campaign, which will consume the majority of the \$25 million in venture capital financing.

WebEx Inc., is a San Jose, Calif.-based start-up that provides meeting services on the web.

The tagline for the WebEx ad campaign will be: "Meetings used to be a drag."

XX Club Officers

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XX Club Brochures

Excerpts from DSM IV

The Harry Benjamin Standards of Care

The Harry Benjamin Sexual Orientation Scale

Information about passports and name changes

The Paper Chase

A Guide to Documentation Regarding Your Name Change, Your Transition, and You.

ZEN and the art of post-operative maintenance

This information was gathered primarily to help get you through the rough times after surgery

Sex difference in the human brain and its relation to transsexuality

This study is the first to show a female brain structure in genetically male transsexuals and supports the hypothesis that gender identity develops as a result of an interaction between the developing brain and sex hormones.

We request a donation of \$1.00, for each brochure ordered. Please fill out the enclosed form inside this newsletter.

“Happiness is a journey, not a destination.”

“We have all been placed on this earth to discover our own path, and we will never be happy if we live someone else’s idea of life.” - James Van Praagh