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# TRANS GENDERIST

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Monthly Magazine of the Transgender Independence Club

January 8, 1998

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## Surfeit of Riches

Hey, no matter how you plan, things are always different. I've had months where I have threatened to write my life story ("I was born at an early age..."), so this month there is really too much to print (alleluia!). We begin with Callan's thought-provoking article on the New Year.

IMMEDIATELY read the coming events part; you will notice all sorts of neat stuff coming up. My personal contribution was getting Dr. Schrang to the Twenty Club in March, and I hope those of you who have GID (or are getting there) will avail yourself of this opportunity to see the work of one of the greatest SRS surgeons in the world. Those desiring transportation to Hartford should contact me.

I received a lot of compliments about the humor in the last issue, so there are a few more tidbits in here as well. I take no credit for the humor, and that way I avoid much of the blame.

There are some serious parts also. Consider carefully the case of Sabrina Robb. As far as The Lady Chablis, well.... --Vix

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If a man is standing in the middle of the forest speaking and there is no woman around to hear him - Is he still wrong?

If a deaf person swears, does his mother wash his hands with soap?

If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?

Is there another word for synonym?

Isn't it a bit unnerving that doctors call what they do practice?

## New Year, New Commitment, New Life

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"we can never be born enough. We are human beings; for whom birth is a supremely welcome mystery, the mystery of growing: the mystery that happens only and whenever we are faithful to ourselves."

--e. e. cummings

"There is no birth without pain."

--Carl Jung

A new year is born. A new us is born. We make resolutions about the changes we want to embody, make commitments about how we will embody the change that we see in our minds eye.

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world."

--Gandhi

Change takes commitment, both belief that change is possible, that we can transform beyond the limits of our social history and our biology to become something new and better and the discipline and endurance to achieve that change.

"The true gift the transgendered to society is not perspectives on men and women from someone who supposedly has been both, but the knowledge that humans can transform, can

achieve magic, when we commit totally to an inner truth, no matter what sacrifice or danger it brings."

--Rachel Pollack

It is the discipline of change, staying the course beyond the frustrations and the awkwardness, that lets us transform our intentions into habits, lets others see the change in us, lets the change occur.

"Half the failures of this world arise from pulling in one's horse as he is leaping."

--Augustus Hare

"Ninety-nine percent of failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses."

--George Washington Carver

"The trick is not how much pain you feel but how much joy you feel. Any idiot can feel pain. Life is full of excuses to feel pain, excuses not to live, excuses, excuses, excuses."

--Erica Jong

This discipline requires immersion, past the dipping of one's toe into the lake of change, but jumping in, finding a new way of being, a new way of thinking.

"Only one who devotes himself to a cause with his whole strength and soul can be a true master. For this reason mastery demands all of a person."

--Albert Einstein

Though that immersion, we live out the calling in our heart, find the mighty purpose that society has asked us to keep hidden for other's comfort.

"This is the true joy in life - being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the

world will not devote itself to making you consistent."

--George Bernard Shaw

This is following our bliss, trusting in the ecstatic purpose and pull that we feel in our heart.

"In our culture, ecstasy is not respectable, but then it never is. It breaks everything down and overwhelms us. We feel shame because the drive, the ecstatic push to transformation is so powerful we're ashamed of its intensity, ashamed that we could not overcome it. And ashamed perhaps too that something so absurd as gender (not to mention underwear) can be at the source of it."

--Rachel Pollack

"Only by attempting the absurd can we achieve the impossible."

"Frivolity is important. Frivolity is the species refusal to suffer."

--John Lahr

Trusting the change, finding the mastery for which we are coded is our salvation.

"If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."

--Jesus Christ, Gnostic Gospels

As we commit to that change, to becoming the change we wish to see in the world, the world moves with us.

"The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of wonderful things occur to help one, that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would come his way.

Whatever you can do or dream, you can begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."

--Goethe

It's not easy, but beginning is the way to become.

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

--Sally Berger

"Long years must pass before the truths we have made for ourselves become our very flesh."

-- Paul Valery

Making commitments takes the courage of trusting that we have something important to give, that life is short and we need to make the most of it.

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the judgment that something else is more important than fear."

--Ambrose Redmoon

At New Years, we begin again, our life starting over in every moment, and we have the chance to change, to follow our bliss.

"We have to dare to be ourselves, no matter how frightening or strange that self may prove to be."

--May Sarton

"Man is born to live and not to prepare to live."

--Boris Pasternak

"Don't be afraid your life will end; be afraid that it will never begin."

--Grace Hansen

At this new year, may your life begin again in the moment you commit to the dreams in your heart -- even the ones that seem frivolous.

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When sign makers go on strike, is anything written on their signs?

## Worker Described as 'An Excellent Employee'

Reprinted from Transgender News / OnQ  
12/27/97

OCALA -- U.S. Rep. Cliff Stearns is asking state officials to set dress standards for government workplaces after a male state health agency employee in Ocala began reporting for work dressed as a woman.

Stearns, R-Ocala, said several employees in the Ocala offices of the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Developmental Services were offended and distracted by the cross-dressing of Sabrina Marie Theodora Robb, formerly Dale T. Robb, an AHCA human resources counselor.

"It sends wrong signals to our children and people of this county if we tolerate these cultural values," Stearns said. "I think the public would have a high level of discomfort with his work activities. That's why I feel pretty strongly about doing this. It's antithetical to our morals in Ocala."

Sabrina Robb declined to comment to the Star-Banner.

Robb is employed through the AHCA's Gainesville office and works as an assistant to Dotti Pohleven in Ocala. Pohleven said that while Robb's change of dress has been a distraction to some, it has not affected his work performance.

"He's an excellent employee and a great asset to the MediPass program," Pohleven said. "He's very dependable. He's thorough. We have, from time to time, contact with (Medicaid) providers and with clients, and it's been a concern what their reaction is. But it's too soon to really know if there's any reaction at all."

The agency's employee handbook does not have a dress code; however, one paragraph says, "employees are expected to be neat and clean in appearance and to dress appropriately for the office and for contact with the public." Stearns said he became involved because local officials

had not acted on the complaints.

"From our standpoint, we think that this is really a state problem," Stearns said. "This is a state employee in a state agency. However, as an elected fellow officer, I think it's important to point out that there's a legal precedent that a state can act on this particular case. I think the state should address it immediately and set in place something, to set a standard because of this, and that they should implement something to stop this."

In a letter to Florida Senate President Toni Jennings and Speaker of the House Daniel Webster, Stearns cited two cases that he believes allow the government to regulate a worker's appearance. In one case, the Supreme Court decided the government can determine the proper length of a police officer's hair; in the other, the court ruled that "The First Amendment guarantees free speech and assembly, but it does not guarantee the government employ."

Both Jennings' and Webster's offices are looking into the matter. A staff member from Jennings' office contacted the agency, but no action has been taken, said Colleen David, AHCA spokeswoman in Tallahassee.

The goal of the agency is to protect the rights of all the employees, as well as the public, David said.

"There are issues that are optional and may need clarification," David said. "Uniform dress code is an issue that may require clarification in context with the policy set forth for all state employees."

According to David, Robb works in an administrative position, dealing primarily with health care providers. Although Robb's job description includes some public contact, most of his work is done by telephone or by written correspondence, and he generally does not have contact with Medicaid recipients, David said.

"We are continuing to work with Sabrina and the other employees in that office to assure that the workplace is professional and productive," she said.

In such situations, the constitutional rights of

the individual are considered, but the courts usually do not restrict government employers from establishing dress standards, said Robyn Blumner, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, headquartered in Miami.

"Certainly the employer can and should tolerate differences in personal appearance and dress, but the likelihood is the court would find that the state employer is not constitutionally obligated to tolerate them," she said. Blumner added, however, that the employer should consider whether the employee is doing his job and whether he is disrupting the workplace.

"If he's acting like a disruptive influence, an employer should respond to that," she said. "The courts would uphold the employer's ability to regulate the workplace. If the employer is interested in leaving this guy alone to let him do his job, then leave him alone, and good for the employer for having an open mind about this."

But some of Robb's associates say his attire is a distraction. When Robb first came to work dressed in women's clothing, it was somewhat of a shock, said Gary Hauge, a human services counselor for Developmental Services. "While I, personally am an advocate and supporter of one's individual civil rights, as state employees, we should feel compelled to dress in appropriate attire and project the most favorable impression to the clientele we serve," Hauge said.

Russell S. Crum, a human services program specialist, said Robb changed his appearance gradually, then one day reported to work entirely in female dress. "He was dressing a little bit more feminine, and then he decided to wear dresses and high heels," Crum said. "My question was, basically, 'How do we answer questions from the public?' "

A written dress code would settle the issue once and for all, said Zolika Heath, an AHCA specialist. "Give me a break. This is a state agency," she said. "If this is all right, then he deserves it in writing. Or, if it's not all right, then he deserves it in writing. You know, let's be fair to everybody."

By Marian Rizzo  
Provided by AEGIS News Digest

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Florida Governor:

Honorable Lawton Chiles  
State of Florida  
Executive Office of the Governor  
The Capital  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Letter follows from Stearns:

Congress Of The United States  
House Of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0906

June 20, 1997

(This was sent to the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and the President of the Florida State Senate)

In response to numerous complaints received from my constituents, I am writing to express my concern regarding the professional appearance of Dale Raab, who commonly refers to himself as Sabrina. Mr. Raab is currently a state employee at the State of Florida Health Care Administration in Ocala, Florida, and has chosen to report for work dressed in traditional women's clothing. Obviously, in my hometown of Ocala, this manner of behavior is particularly appalling. My district office has contacted both the local administration office as well as the state offices in Tallahassee. Both of these offices have been reluctant to take action. That is why I am writing to you to request that you take steps to rectify this situation.

Probably no other provision of the Constitution has given rise to so many different views with respect to its underlying philosophical foundations as the guarantee of freedom of expression. As an ardent defender of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, I support the use of individual free

speech, even when it is speech in error, however I contend that the practice of an individual's free speech must not infringe on the rights of the general public. In this case, the general public can be defined to include both Mr. Raab's coworkers and the citizens who seek assistance provided by this administrative office. You can imagine what consternation they must feel when confronted with this deviant behavior.

The government adopts and enforces many measures which are designed to further a valid interest, but which may have restrictive effects upon freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. As an employer, the government is interested in maintaining full production from its employees in a harmonious environment. While I have been told that there has been zero noticeable change in the job performance of Mr. Raab since his selection of women's clothing, his appearance has caused a reasonable level of discomfort in the work environment.

Change has occurred in many contexts, in the main with regard to state and local employees and with regard to varying restrictions placed upon such employees. Foremost among the changes has been the "right-privilege" distinction. In *Bailey v. Richardson*, 341 U.S. 918 (1951) the Supreme Court affirmed a lower court decision which held that "The First Amendment guarantees free speech and assembly, but it does not guarantee the Government employ." It seems appropriate that the State of Florida has the legal authority to expect a reasonable level of professionalism and decorum from its employees, and those who fail to comply should feel free to seek employment elsewhere.

Further, in *Kelly v. Johnson*, 425 U.S. 238 (1976) the Supreme Court held that the government could require police officers to keep their hair trimmed at a reasonable level. Certainly, if the Supreme Court holds that the government can regulate the length of a police officer's hair, an assumption can be made that a male state employee should be prohibited from wearing female clothing.

I feel it is necessary to arrive at a balance between the interests of the individual. As a citizen, in his beliefs and in the interest of the state, in promoting the interests and efficiency of government. I request that you further examine this situation and inform me of your findings. I look forward to your early response.

Sincerely,

Cliff Stearns  
United States Representative

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Now my comments. I have been following this story from the beginning, and Sabrina Robb is being persecuted by both the media and the government. Sabrina is a transitioning transsexual, although you would never suspect it from her news coverage and the angry letter from Cliff Stearns. I believe that Sabrina has personally talked to the Governor of Florida who was impressed with her forthrightness and tact, but who is very much in the middle of this power struggle that sells papers. --Vix

How did THIS spot get in there? Well, I will share a secret about me; I am a procrastinator as far as this newsletter goes. As I write this, it is 2:30 AM on January 8th. I began at 11:30 PM three hours ago. Hey, it is quiet, and right now in my circumstance, THAT is a very unusual situation. Next month I may be writing this longhand; who knows? PS: Anyone involved in parent's rights issues is invited to contact me privately.

I owe Fran a spot in next month's paper about her visit to the Investment Club with her wife. I'm not sure whether I will continue on with Sabrina's saga or go to Wynd's woes; Wynd is the terminated teacher in Quinnipiac College who is suing the college; she spoke and answered questions at a Twenty Club meeting recently.

## And Now A Break...

A blonde and a brunette were watching the 11:00 news. The current news story was about a man up on a ledge and threatening to jump.

(The station cuts to a commercial.)

Brunette: I bet you \$20 he's going to jump.

Blonde: OK.

(back to newscast; he jumps)

Blonde: OK Here's my \$20.

Brunette: No, that was too easy. I can't take it.

Blonde: I insist. I lost.

Brunette: I have a confession to make. I saw the same thing on the 6:00 news and knew he jumped. So it wasn't really a good bet.

Blonde: I know. I saw the same newscast. But I didn't think he would be stupid enough to jump twice.

What didn't you see? I've got this neat article on the non-transitioning Alex Myers (FTM) at Harvard, jokes about the British, eating a bald eagle, coffee, you may be gay if, English subtitles in actual Hong Kong movies, and last but not least, engineers.

I have some serious stuff as well, including a lot of tips. Y'all stay tuned, and enjoy the 75 degree weather expected. Don't think it will last forever, though. Well, I just may break out my white shoes this Saturday....

— Vix



... and the Vermont CD with the gun...

# Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil

<http://www.theladychablis.com/>

Y'WOULDN'T KNOW who I am unless you've read that book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* by John Berendt. Or seen me on *Good Morning America*. Or the *Today Show*. Or *Oprah*. Or read about me and seen my picture in *People* magazine. Or *USA Today*. Or *Entertainment Weekly*. And while I'm on the subject, if you haven't caught my act in any of those places, child, where in the hell have you been?

But that's okay. Do not let it bother you if you are a total ignoramus on the subject of me—otherwise known as *The Doll*, y'mama, *The Lady Chablis*—because I'm fixin' to change all that. I do recommend you read *Midnight*, 'cause it's one hell of a good book—but not now! Now it's time to pay full attention to y'mama.

*Midnight*—or *The Book*, as they call it in Savannah—can wait till later. All you have to know about it for now is that I am the outrageously charming black drag queen who stole the two best chapters in it: "*The Grand Empress of Savannah*" and "*Black Minuet*." John Berendt wrote about me as one of the many quirky folks who helped make Savannah such a kinky background for the bigger story he was telling—the shocking murder case of Miss Jim Williams and his humpy white Georgia-cracker boyfriend, Danny Hansford. John probably thought of me as a minor character, but as *The Doll* proved to him and his readers, she is not, I repeat: N O T—a minor anything.

In case you haven't heard, the movie of *The Book* is about to come out. It's directed by Clint Eastwood who cast *The Doll* to play herself in the role of yours truly. But that just stands to reason, I am

the best person for the job. I must say, it's a good thing they did because I make "*The Movie*". They now refer to me in Hollywood as "*The One Take Wonder*". That's right... Who was the only person to always get her lines? Y'mama that's who..

If you wanna see some pictures from behind the scenes go to my photo page.

There are some fun shots of me with John Cusack and Kevin Spacey and some of my friends. To find out more about the movie "*Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*" click on *Midnight* below. This will take you to their site. And let's not forget that I have my own book out, "*Hiding My Candy*", and you better go buy it you cheap Son of a Bitch!! Warner Bros. has...they've bought the rights to make a movie of my book. That's right, lit'l ol me. So don't you worry child, it looks like you'll have lots of chances to see me in the future.

In the mean time, enjoy *The Book*, *The Movie*, *My Book* and my web page. Can I hear a YEAH BITCH !! Ooooh, thank you honey.

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A nursing home resident, suffering from dementia, decided to shed all of her clothes and "streak." She passed two male residents sitting in their wheel chairs in the hallway. The first male asked the second, "Who was that?"  
Second: "I THINK it was 'Miss Rita.'"  
First: "Well, what was that she had on?"  
Second: "I don't know, but it sure needed ironing."

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## Lost Dog.

3 legs  
Blind in left eye  
Missing right ear  
tail broken  
No teeth  
Recently castrated  
Answers to the name "Lucky"

**Transgenderist's Independence Club**  
**PO Box 13604, Albany, NY 12212-3604**  
**(518) 436-4513 (live Thurs.7:30-10 PM)**

Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

#### **TGIC Officers**

President Winnie [REDACTED]  
Vice President  
Secretary Rhiannon  
Treasurer  
Newsletter Editor Vicky E. [REDACTED]  
Facilities Tina, Edie, Rhiannon  
Outreach  
Program/Events

The Transgenderist is the newsletter of TGIC, published monthly and mailed First Class to members, prospective members, friends, professionals, and exchange publications. Copyright 1998 TGIC. No part may be reproduced without prior permission from the originator.

Readers are invited to submit articles relevant to the Transgendered Community for consideration. You may bring or mail typed pages for publication to the TGIC clubroom. Format should follow that shown in the current newsletter. You may also e-mail the articles to [REDACTED]. The article should be part of the body of the e-mail.

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30pm to 10pm. Some come earlier and stay later, but it is wise to call if you are not a Keyholder or if it is your first visit. Come dressed either way, meet and talk with friends. Many continue to socialize at one of the local night spots after the meetings.

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#### **BECOME AN IFGE MEMBER**

The International Foundation for Gender Education is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Basic membership is \$25 per year. Subscriptions to Transgender Tapestry are \$40. Brochures and forms are available in the TGIC Club Room. Call or write to:

IFGE (617) 899-2212  
PO Box 229  
Waltham, MA 02154-0229

The I.F.G.E. Internet version of Transgender Tapestry is available at:

<http://www.tiac.net/users/dba/ifge/ifge.htm>

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#### **ANONYMOUS HIV ANTIBODY TESTING**

Your regional HIV Counseling and Testing Program provides free HIV counseling and antibody testing, support and referral. No names will be asked.

(NYS Health Department)

Call: (518) 486-1595 or 1-800-962-5065.

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#### **Connections**

**Psychotherapy Associates**

MOONHAWK RIVER STONE, B.S.  
PH.D CANDIDATE

518-446-1261 10 Colvin Avenue Albany, NY  
12206



**Arlene Istar Lev**  
R-CSW, CASAC

321 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206  
518/463-9152

**Choices**  
Counseling Associates





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## Therapeutic Support Group

for Transgender/Transsexual M to F is now accepting new members. Topics include Coming Out, Transitioning, Family issues, Jobs and Careers, Self Esteem. Contact:

Arlene Istar Lev R-CSW, CAS-AC  
Choices Counseling Associates  
321 Washington Ave  
Albany, New York 12206

518-463-9152

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## TGIC On-Line

All transgendered people are invited to join TGIC On-Line, an informal e-mail network sponsored by Transgenderist Independence Club (TGIC). Messages exchanged on TGIC On-Line focus on events of interest to transgendered people in a region from Lake Placid to Newburg. If you are interested in joining the network, or want more information about TGIC, send an e mail message to: [TGIC-request@hartebeest.com](mailto:TGIC-request@hartebeest.com) with any subject line and in the message body, the text:

JOIN TGIC  
STOP

(Please note: JOIN TGIC must be on line 1. STOP must be on line 2) You will receive an automated acknowledgment (Journal) of your request, which must be approved with the list moderator.

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## TRI-ESS MEETINGS IN SCHENECTADY

Meetings are held at "YOURS", which is located at 145 Barrett Street in Schenectady. Call Monica at (518) 863-2783 or Evelyn at (315) 894-5421 for further information.

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## Calendar and Events

TGIC meetings are held Thursdays at 7:30 in the clubhouse.

### Events of Note

Note: TransPositions has been rescheduled, and I will get that information to you as soon as I can get it reposted. *(Does anyone have this?)*

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| January 10          | Twenty Club, Hartford   |
| January 16-19       | Dignity Cruise #9<br>with Peggy Rudd                              |
| January 18          | Open Forum on Transgender<br>Saratoga 7 PM <i>(story follows)</i> |
| January 23, NYC     | They Lived It Out!<br>Honoring all dead TG                        |
| January 24          | Twenty Club, Hartford   |
| February 26-March 1 | Texas "T" Party   |
| March 24-26         | Full Circle of Women Conf.  |
| March 24-29         | IFGE's Crossing Borders<br>Toronto 1998                           |
| March 28            | Twenty Club, Dr. Schrang  |

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- > sexual harassment?
- > assault or rape?
- > remaining silent bothering you?
- > no help from conventional sources?

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952 Troy-Schenectady Rd.  
Latham, N.Y. 12110  
782-1426*

## Open Forum on Transgender

Sunday, January 18

7 PM

Saratoga Wellness Alliance, 376 Broadway,  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
(518) 583-0339

There are many people in our community who don't fit neatly into simple roles of man or woman. This open forum is designed to be a place where transgendered people can share their own stories of how they manage an existence between and across the genders, be they crossdressers, transsexuals or anyone else who crosses gender lines.

The evening will include a video screening of the film "Paris Is Burning" a critically acclaimed documentary by Jenny Livingston about the voguing and pageant culture in New York City, where many black and latina transgendered people express themselves. Local transgendered people are also scheduled to present, including Callan Williams, and time is scheduled for open discussion.

All with an interest in learning more about these subjects are welcome to attend. Transgendered people are especially encouraged to visually express transgender at this event.

The Saratoga Wellness Alliance is a facility that supports classes in awareness and healing across many disciplines. We encourage people to find and express their center in positive and nurturing ways.

For more information on this program or the Saratoga Wellness Alliance, contact Johnna or Angela at the number above.

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Comments? Vicky E. [REDACTED], [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Albany, NY 12203.

All the news that fits.