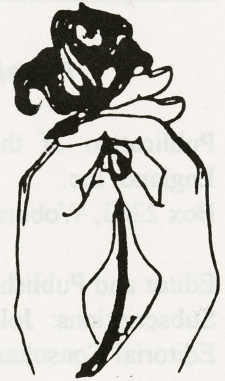




Rosebuds



May 1997

Annual Subscription \$25

Tiffany Club of New England

Volume IX

Issue 5

HIV Education Counseling and Testing at TCNE

by Brenda Burke

On a recent Tuesday night a group from Wayside Youth & Family Support Network visited the Tiffany Club for an informative, educational session on HIV and AIDS. HIV/AIDS counselor Marty Bearer and our own Nancy Cain put together the workshop, which was received well by members in attendance.

The first speaker from the Wayside group was Pam Mullins, a mother from Hopkinton. She shared with us a story that hit home, the tragic death from AIDS of her daughter Chris, who was transgender. Like most of us, Chris grew up always interested in the feminine--fascinated with her mom's makeup and clothes, more interested in playing with Barbies than climbing trees like her younger brothers. Unfortunately, she was taunted and beat up often as an adolescent. Mrs. Mullins asked Chris if he was gay when he reached puberty and again during his adolescence, but this did not describe Chris. The mother recalled that she had never heard the words transsexual or transgender. By the age of 18, Chris presented herself to her mother as the person that she felt most comfortable being--a beautiful young lady, in makeup and women's clothes. How Mrs. Mullins came to accept Chris, and her strength in providing

care for her dying daughter in the face of ignorance and prejudice, were a touching Mother's Day tribute to higher love.

The next speaker was an HIV-positive mother. She told of how she had contracted the HIV virus from an infected IV needle, used to inject drugs. But instead of giving up when she discovered that she was HIV positive, she turned her life around. She has been clean for over five years, and has benefitted from the AIDS medications now available. She has also married, and given birth to two beautiful children, whom she calls the "miracles." Both babies were born HIV positive, but their bodies were able to reject the virus. Of course, she says, "Even though I'm HIV positive, I'm still their mom. They can get on my nerves, like all kids do." Her life story shows us that HIV is not a death sentence--it is possible to live productively if you don't give up and get superior medical care.

After a 10-minute break, Marty reviewed how the AIDS virus is spread and how it can be prevented. She asserted that that the virus was not "caused by some little green monkey," as one rumor says. Instead, Marty

(continued on page 10)

Rosebuds monthly

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Brenda insists that all articles be submitted by the 10th of the month. Diligence is much appreciated.

A TASTE OF BOSTON

by Karen Melanson

I was looking for something to do on Sunday, May 4, when the mail came on Saturday. There was a flyer from radio station WRKO announcing "A Taste of Boston," to be held Sunday at the FleetCenter. "What a wonderful idea," I thought. It sounded like just the place to go and do something just a little different. There was even a discount coupon included.

The next morning I decided to dress in a wide width blue floral skirt with a matching pink blouse. Even though the temperature was supposed to be in the 60's (it wasn't), I decided to also wear a blue blazer. I've been going out for over a year and by now am pretty comfortable and passable in public.

I got to the FleetCenter about 15 minutes before the doors opened and encountered a sea of humanity. There were literally thousands of people all jammed together waiting for the doors to open at noon. We were all standing--or should I say pressing--next to each other. It didn't matter if they were small children or babies in carriages. I felt bad for them since there was no place for them to go. Even though I was standing very, very close to the people around me it went off very smoothly.

Finally at 12:04 the FleetCenter opened and we all went up one level, to wait again in another series of lines to purchase tickets for the event. This process took about 15 minutes, and then we had to move through the lines waiting to buy still more tickets to enter the exhibit area. I hooked up behind two women, which made my journey from one end of the ticket lines to the other end easier. Once again, although it was crowded, it went off smoothly.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from previous page)

"A Taste of Boston" was held on two levels. The main stage area was fairly roomy, with areas for kids' entertainment, a WRKO radio broadcast from the location, about a dozen exhibitors with samples of their products (food, soft drinks, ice cream), and a stage area for live entertainment which was held throughout the day. I got around this area very well as there was plenty of room and not that many people. I discovered why when I went to the next floor.

On the concourse area were booths set up along the walls, with at least 50 vendors who were distributing American and international food; wine, spirits, and beer; plenty of desserts; health foods; and snacks. This is where everybody was. The tables with the various food and drink were 3 to 4 deep with people looking to get the free samples. It was very uncomfortable trying to get near the tables, with people bumping and maneuvering for position. I got my pocketbook knocked off twice, but otherwise I was not the worse for wear.

The one interesting section was the section for alcohol. This presented me with a challenge, because to take drinks you had to go to a special table and show your ID to prove you were over 21. Once you proved you were of age, they put a special bracelet on your wrist so you could go into the drinking area. Now anyone who knows me can see that I'm over 21, but I wanted to try out my non-government-issued Mass ID, which had my picture, date of birth, etc., on it. This was the first time I had shown it to anyone and I wanted to see how it would work. I passed this test with flying colors. However, I'm not totally convinced this was a valid test, because there were hundreds of people crowding around the table. Anyway, I got to sample wines, spirits, and beers out of a shot-sized cup after showing off my ID. I tried to get as many samples of various items as I could while still maintaining a ladylike image, which meant that I didn't go

after everything since certain tables were just too impossible to get near.

I played this game for about 2 hours and finally gave it up. I was exhausted and tired, but I was also very pleased with myself for mixing together with thousands of people in very close confines and not being "read" (or at least heard or felt that I was read). I would not recommend this experience too often, but I'm very glad I went to A Taste of Boston and would recommend this to anyone who feels comfortable and passable for next year.

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THE HOLLY CROSS ARCHIVES

[ED: Somewhere in Waltham we find reminders. An electric typewriter that no longer obeys a master, a nameplate heralding "Miss Provincetown" affixed prominently. The mysterious call letters WIOOP. And a stack of correspondences and commentaries that sheds light on some of the most intriguing recent developments in the gender community. To whom do we owe these timeless artifacts? Why, to none other than that notorious "post-op transvestite" Holly Cross. Just because she has relocated to southern California does not mean that Holly's voice will stop being heard. We hope to feature more from this unique collection from the future, as well as any current musings from Ms. Cross. The International Foundation for Gender Education now has her correspondences stored in its archives. *Rosebuds* thanks the IFGE for permission to print (or reprint) these excerpts.]

BECOMING A (fill in your own term of opprobrium)

I guess I'm preaching to the choir. It seems fairly evident now...as soon as the present crop of counselors and psychiatrists die off or retire, most people will start to agree...that homosexuals are born with the tendency, strong or latent, and the MANY "gays" who married in the 1920s and 1930s have (some of them) reproduced, siring normal "straight" offspring, who may not have found out about their father's sexual orientation until it became more stylish and less subject to instant exile from jobs and society. (Of course there always were some jobs--artist, ballet dancer--where it wasn't unusual and in fact may have had advantages.)

What brought this up was a couple of recent news items, one from New Jersey, where a drug addict made a stink about being in a skit where he was chosen to be

crossdressed; another where a man beat his two-year-old son to death because his mannerisms were effeminate. He was "becoming homosexual," said Diaz. "Becoming"?

This brings up the Brazilian or Puerto Rican idea of what is a homosexual. "He who gets penetrated is, he who penetrates isn't. Those who crossdress are looking for business." I assume the men named had similar views. And for a man to be asked for sex is, of course, an affront to his machismo. (Only women have to say "no").

When the IFGE convention was in Boston, we had an encounter: a happy and rather inebriated French-Canadian who was throwing a private party kissed a Brazilian waiter. Besides the language problem on the part of the waiter, there was this cultural thing; kissing is what Frenchmen and TVs do, but Brazilian men don't. The waiter complained to management that someone had tried to rape him. (Next time, specify all female help?)

Anyhow, I think we ultimately will find that much of what gives us anything from a mild desire to crossdress (there are people who try it a year or two and then either give it up, or go back to the locked bedroom) to transsexual tendencies, is a matter of prenatal brain development. The problem isn't killing any old rich men, so I don't think an investigation will be funded very soon.

But just as I told the lady in Dallas who had found out her MD son was gay: If she'd known what it was that did it, there is nothing to be done now, except love him, for he sounds like a son to be proud of.

(Continued on next page)

Holly (continued from page 4)

TO: The high school social worker or other person concerned with gay or lesbian students

Dear sir or madam,

It is currently fashionable to be concerned about homosexual or bisexual students, but there are more sorts than that. In any high school there are also those who are crossdressers, male-to-female transsexuals, and female-to-male transsexuals. I know, because I talk to them. Some feel they may be gay, some are pretty sure they are not, but they don't care to be classified as homosexual.

The crossdressers typically are interested in girls. Some will have a girlfriend, but they also get a thrill (and when one is adolescent, all thrills are somewhat sexual) from dressing in girl's clothing. Fewer than 10 percent are also gay or bi.

Transsexuals know that they are in the wrong body. Adolescence is a time of extreme stress for a boy who knows he should have been a girl, what with voice changing and growing hair on his face--all the things that he had been hoping wouldn't happen to him. Likewise for the female-to-male girls: growing breasts and the start of her periods are likely to be a time of extreme depression; she didn't need THOSE!

A major problem is their legal status. We would be happy to talk to them, but we would prefer to do so with the consent of, or, if in person, in the presence of at least one parent.

Dr. Sheila Kirk of this office has a research project concerning such adolescents; any data would be coded and confidential (anonymous would still be useful).

We sell books for the male crossdresser. We feel our publication "Aspects of Gender" would be helpful, and there are others covering the problems of transsexuals.

...

In Oct. 1989 I went to London and had a fine time, essentially 12 days en femme full time. In 1990 nothing unusual, though I did get to various conventions, and of course put one on here. Some problems for me: The hotel was around four miles from where I worked, so I kept my head low. I didn't get to see all of it that I would have liked. For one thing I did a lot of chauffeuring of the F-to-M TSs who came to the convention. (Dan was sort of their den mother, among other things, helping with hotel rooms...and I did the airport pickup bit when possible.)

...In Oct. 90, right after Fantasia Fair I went into the hospital and had my prostate cored--2 oz. of meat removed. It wasn't big as prostates go. At my request, the surgeon also did a bilateral orchiectomy, so one might call me "postop". The change was small, so far as I could notice, but it laid the way for me to start on Premarin.

One purple pill a day fairly regularly since a year ago, again only a little bit of change, subjectively. I find that any higher dose than 2-2 1/2 mg/day affects my blood pressure and mental operation adversely. I am probably getting as much effect as if I were a normal male taking 7 1/2 mg/day. Most of what I notice is a matter of sore breasts and instant weight gain--even my rings don't fit!

...

She was striding down the sidewalk when I saw her, in her leather jacket and miniskirt, looking very good. I should look so good; she left me very envious...for sixty years young ladies that age have made me envious. At that age, walking home from MIT, I thought I was pretty good, but I never walked with that much pride...nothing to be proud about. Just an overweight male veteran.

My mother had it pretty good when she was twenty: I can imagine her going home from a suffrage march; her family was rich, as a teenager she had a rowboat (a
(Continued on page 7)

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Swampscott Dory), and, she always mentioned her horse, making the point that she could wear jodhpurs all the time. No miniskirts in those days...ladies didn't wear pants. And a red sports car. Red? Of course, what other color is there for a sports car? Tall, thin, sort of athletic, she must have looked good driving the Stutz. Well, I never was a young lady from any sort of family, to my regret.

But why be envious? Because I'm a crossdresser. In North America, where the status of women was always high, and England and Scandinavia, we have men who like to crossdress, who fantasize about being an attractive young lady, because to be a woman is NOT a "step down" in our cultures. Looking good is our dream (I am a Hillary Clinton fan). I feel so assured in a skirt suit. Of course a leather miniskirt and a well-fitted jacket is sort of a skirt suit, and I wished I owned such.

At 190 lbs. I am not likely to. I won't be eighteen again either.

...

Let's save some money---

At the going rate of perhaps \$10,000 per SRS operation for one transsexual, it seems that this rather crude therapy is somewhat of an economic bargain. Many of those who are trapped in the hiatus between here and surgery have problems with drugs or with alcohol. To cure a relative of a drug dependency a few years ago cost some \$12,000. The drugs cost several times that before treatment was started, and they put my relative's husband into bankruptcy.

If the problems are that expensive in dollars for a pre-op, and the time of a young person's life that is essentially wasted is certainly valuable in dollars, it makes sense the same way that many orthopedic operations do. The person can go back to work and pay for the surgery, which in saving the value of one good citizen, surely is worth spending the money on--based on the life that is salvaged. Ten thousand dollars


for major surgery is good value for money, at least if one thinks about what is obtained for the effort.

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Stephanie Robin, Programs Director

Important Note: The following is subject to addition, change, and deletion without notice. You should contact the Tiffany hot line (617-891-9325) or the Electronic Bulletin Board (617-899-3230) for the most current schedule information. The hot line is updated routinely each Sunday and whenever necessary, and answered live on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 PM to 10 PM. Unless otherwise noted, event location is the TCNE facility. Facility hours of operation during Tuesday meetings are 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM

Event rules of conduct: It is important to TCNE, Inc., that all encounters with the general public reflect positively on yourself and on the Club. Therefore, we would ask that people dress and act in a way that is appropriate for the event. Call in for latest updates or cancellations.

(FP/NP) indicates a First Person/New Person event.

JUNE

JULY



JUNE 1-7 IS GAY PRIDE WEEK
CELEBRATE WITH TCNE!

- 3 (FP/NP) Open Meeting
- 4 **IFGE Open House**
123 Moody St., Waltham
(617) 899-2212
- 5 Exploring Womanhood
- 6 Wives' Support Meeting. 7:30PM
- 7 **GAY PRIDE PARADE**
9 AM Free breakfast at
Cambridge City Hall.
Shuttle buses to Copley
Square for parade.
Contact TCNE or IFGE.
- 10 (FP/NP) Open Meeting
- 12 Exploring Womanhood
- 17 (FP/NP) Open Mtg/Model's
Resale nite
- 19 Exploring Womanhood
- 24 (FP/NP) Open Meeting
Board of Directors 7:30 PM
- 26 CD Distress workshop

- 1 (FP/NP) Open meeting
- 3 Exploring Womanhood
- 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
- 8 (FP/NP) Open meeting
- 10 Exploring Womanhood
- 11 Wives' Support meeting. 7:30 PM
- 15 (FP/NP) Open meeting/
Model's Resale nite
- 17 Exploring Womanhood
- 22 (FP/NP) Open meeting.
Board of Directors meeting
- 24 Exploring Womanhood
- 29 (FP/NP) Open meeting
- 31 Exploring Womanhood

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Vendors of products and services may demonstrate their wares to the Tiffany membership in several different ways. You may arrange for a Tuesday night presentation at the facility (7-10 PM--Open Meeting Night), you may present at the Tiffany office on a Monday or Thursday. You may present as a vendor at our annual first Event in January. Please contact our programs committee (TCNE Programs, POB 2283, Woburn MA 01888-0483) or call (617) 891-9325 to review options or make arrangements.

THE DISH

Brenda "Starr" Emily

What a great time of year this is! The bad weather is behind us (I hope), we all had a great time at Tiffany's Senior Prom, and the band just got through playing at Jacque's. And it doesn't stop there: It's straight into the Spring Fling. Time to set your brain on "relax" mode and lay back. Meet old friends and new, go shopping, eat out, sail off on a whale watch, or just lay on the beach and (hopefully) attract some hunky admirers.

But wait--there's still more! There's a lot going on during Gay Pride Week around the Boston area. On Thursday, there's a special fetish show featuring your favorite trans band TranZGression at Hexx, a new Boston club right next to Nick's Comedy Stop. And as Madame President noted last month, Tiffany will have an official presence at the big parade on Saturday. I expect the number of marchers from Tiffany to grow from last year's contingent, although we had quite a few at the 1996 parade. I just hope the weather is as nice, the complementary breakfast at Cambridge City Hall is as good--but that the participants keep it PG-rated, at least when the cameras are around. I'm not offended by nudity, it's simply a matter of unnecessarily distracting the press, and by extension the public at large, from the rest of the parade. Maybe the nude stiltwalkers can join the Southie parade next year instead.

Editorial Dept.: You will find an ad asking for volunteers to help out the Club. One easy way to do so is to contribute in some way to Rosebuds. For those of you who aren't literarily inclined, there are other responsibilities with which we need help. Jonel and Johanna have been helping with the mailing, but they would welcome assistance in their duties. The mailing is our major bottleneck with mailing Rosebuds out to

members and subscribers. I'm sorry for the inconvenience that these gaps in the system have caused, but preparing the mailing takes up more time than many people realize. Another area of confusion has been advertising. The Board of Directors is keen on boosting revenues, so we would like to streamline this process. For now, the ad rates will stay in the masthead, but they might soon see an increase in rates. On the other hand, the Tuesday night stuffers are really doing great. Here's a big "Attagirl!" to all the ladies who've taken their Club time to get *Rosebuds* down the line.

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HIV (continued from front page)

emphasized that although there are better medications now and people with AIDS are living longer, there is still no cure. Unlike her presentations to young people, she did not demonstrate the use of the latex condom with a zucchini. On the other hand, she did introduce many of us to the female condom and the proper way to use it. Both types of condoms were made available to those who wished to take them. Marty then led the group through a short question-and-answer session, and the other members of Wayside--Rose, Gina, and Robin--prepared for testing.

The testing was simple, fast and efficient. Marty made it clear the tests were anonymous, meaning that the person did not have to share the test results with their health care provider if they elected not to. In a two-part procedure, the ladies who chose to be tested got in line, and went one by one into a side room, where the Wayside staff person asked confidential questions about the person's sexual history. She gave the test subject a serial number, which would be placed on the blood sample sent to the lab. Finally came the test itself. I know that some of us get queasy at the thought of giving blood (much less the thought of AIDS), but it's a small price to pay for information that could save your life. Even if you're over 99% sure you're HIV negative, do yourself a favor and remove all doubt by getting tested in a way that protects your rights as a patient.

Marty will return to the club on Thursday, May 29, to give the test results, which again will be anonymous. She says she has applied to the state for funds for a once monthly transgender testing, and is keeping her fingers crossed. She adds that her staff at Wayside will provide considerate treatment for Tiffany Club members. Robin, who is transgender, has volunteered to help Marty with the TG counseling.

Marty Bearer can be contacted at (508) 481-8290, extension 117; fax (508) 460-6993; email mbearer@waysideyouth.org.

Sharon Cushman

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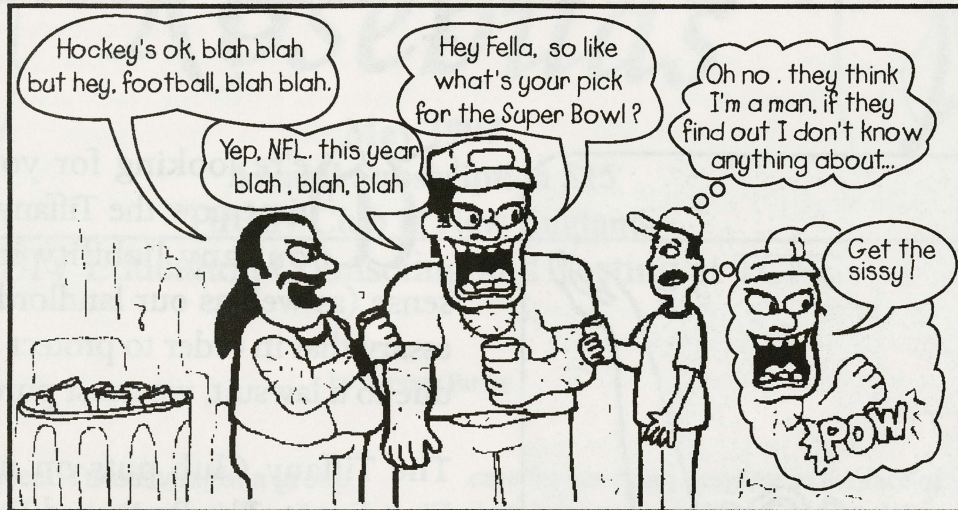
Stuck in the Middle



© Gina Kamentsky 1997

WITH **TGINA**

Back when I was a "man" I would be at a bar or party standing around with a bunch of guys. Invariably, the "sports thing" would come up.



Hockey's ok, blah blah but hey, football, blah blah.

Hey Fella, so like what's your pick for the Super Bowl?

Yep, NFL. this year blah, blah, blah

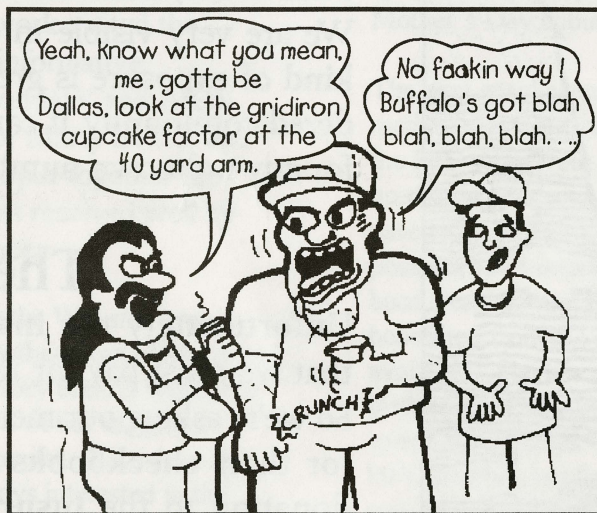
Oh no. they think I'm a man, if they find out I don't know anything about...

Get the sissy!

POW!



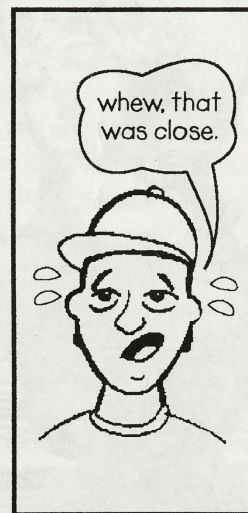
Umm, uh...I'm not really committed to any team this year.



Yeah, know what you mean, me, gotta be Dallas, look at the gridiron cupcake factor at the 40 yard arm.

No faakin way! Buffalo's got blah blah, blah, blah...

CRUNCH!



whew, that was close.



Nowadays as a Transsexual woman I have alot less trouble...



Oh, I remember palazzo pants

Every girl used to wear those!

Sure and those blouses with the Peter Pan collars we wore at Girl Scout Camp..

Gina, you went to girl scout camp, didn't you?

umm...sure

By the way, did you catch the NBA. playoffs last night?



Here we go again!

We're Calling on Everyone For a Helping Hand.



We're looking for your help. For a long time now the Tiffany Club has been without any liability insurance. Common sense (as well as our landlord) has deemed it necessary that in order to protect the club from folding due to a lawsuit, we must purchase insurance.

The Tiffany Club puts on many events such as First Event, The Prom and Fall and Spring Flings. We are very visible in the community. While this kind of exposure is great for us and the transgendered community, it can also expose us to lawsuits for any unknown number of reasons.

The Cost

Unfortunately the insurance company requires that we must pay for the whole premium upfront. So we're asking our members to go into their purses for their checkbooks and help us by making a donation to the Insurance Fund. The premium will be about \$1200, which comes out to only \$12 a person if everyone contributed. Make checks payable to TCNE. As always, your donations are tax deductible. So give what you can, but please give. We've been lucky so far.

Thank You,

The Tiffany Club, Inc.

Board of Directors

Tiffany Club of New England
P.O. Box 2283 • Woburn, Ma 01888-0483