

The Crystal Chronicle

Columbus, OH

<http://www.tgender.net/cc>

Vol. 13 No. 12 - December 2001

Current Officers

President - Tina

Vice President - Valerie

Treasurer - Dianna Mills

Secretary - Jenifer

Newsletter Editor(s) - Nikki

Meeting Coordinator - Group

Screening Officer(s)

Internet - Rachel

Phone - Tina

Web Mistress - Mary Ann

Assistant - Nikki

Librarian - Valerie

The Crystal Chronicle is the official newsletter of the Crystal Club. The Chronicle is published and mailed a week prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.

Complementary copies of the Chronicle may be obtained by contacting a club officer or any club member.

News items for the Chronicle should be mailed to the Club before the end of each month. The e-mail address is:
ccnl@tgender.net

Please specify in the subject field that this is an article for the newsletter.

President's Corner

-Tina

Merry Christmas Ladies!! I want to thank everyone in the club for all the hard work you all put into making us a successful club that is not in the red nor do we need to charge high fees for our meetings. And I want to wish that every member and every newcomer whether 1st time or 2nd time - for coming to our meetings and showing you unity for our support group as transgendered people. For all who made it to our Christmas party you enjoyed yourself with a great meal prepared by Dianne Mills and her spouse Peg. We were lucky to have Meral Crane attend the party, just her presence is nice...we love having her. I (Tina) gave out awards to several outstanding people...Meral Crane, Dianna Mills, Diana Britt, Valerie (our VP), Rachel, Jenifer, Nikki, Mary Ann, Kelly (two founding Mothers), Judy, and had to give Stephanie an IOU award (by the way Stephanie, I have it ready for you now), and I would like to also give my special recognition award to every member of the club for helping us thru a great year. My wish is that every one of you have a nice Christmas - may you have plenty to eat and be with many friends. I want to thank all the people mentioned above that received awards for helping the Crystal Club a successful organization that it is. Ladies, you all deserve a standing ovation for pulling together as a team. We have some big needs next year - we need some volunteers to step forward and help assume several key positions in the club that is putting several other officers with doing two jobs. We have an important position to fill as Meeting Coordinator (the people who bring the food every month). Next month's meeting is nominations of officers, and February is election month - Please renew your membership and use your talents to us to keep us alive - we need you ladies - Get involved!! Thanks again, Tina

Meeting notes

We had a wonderful Christmas Party – much thanks to Dianne and Peg for cooking a wonderful Christmas meal. We had many guests, as Tina mentioned in her article. Thanks to all who attended – it was the start of a special holiday season.

Officer's Needed!!!

Next month is the nomination for officers. We really need some members to step up and take over some key positions. A very few members are handling the club business, and several officers are handling two (or more) positions. This does not represent the membership of the club appropriately, nor is the situation fair to the current board members.

To assume that “someone else” will take the load is dangerous – it threatens the well-being of the club and our ongoing ability to support the TG community. We are all busy these days – but only you can become involved – we need your hands to carry some of the load!

Valley Gems Meeting

This is a reminder to let you know that the Valley Gems meet on the first Saturday of each month. For more information on the club please call Holly at 937-236-0477.

Member Contri!

Cancelled Appointments, a Good Friend Departs

Friday morning, I needed to change my appointment set for next week, she didn't answer. I thought Cathy was taking an extra day off. I would have to call again Monday. That call was never to be made. Sunday I received the news that she died on Thanksgiving. With being out of town most of the past two months, I was unaware that she was struck with a major health issue early in November.

Sad seems so trite, not enough. Catherine Houck, CT (electrologist) was a dear friend to me and

to our community. I have known her for over ten years, I had my first “no pain, no gain” session with her in August 1991. At that time I was not planning any change of life, I really just wanted to clean up part of my facial hair, it was sparse in spots, heavy in others. Three or four sessions later she became the first person beyond the community and my wife that I ever came out to. I had asked her about working on men, and she replied that there had been a few others, mostly gay guys who were drag queens. She went on that she never knew of any guys who did that who were straight. I managed to say, “you're working on one now.” She continued another 20 seconds, before she stopped, mouth open a bit, “say that again?” We proceeded from there.

A friendship was born. She never had any reservations about working with the TG community. I began to sing her praises around Crystal Club. She always told me that she was forever grateful for all the clientele I was responsible for directing to her, word of mouth and by blurbs/ads in the Chronicle. I can now finally reveal, that she may have given the TG community a 10% discount on rates, but she never raised mine. I was still paying the same hourly rate in 2001 as I began with in 1991! I offered to pay her more, but that was her thanks. You can still check her ad in the Yellow Pages, where it mentions ‘TG.’ A code just for us, the general public wouldn't have a clue!

She always kept me informed on the other members she treated, without divulging anything sensitive. Several months after I started, Cindy/Bill (another friend we lost, in May 1995) began treatments. I told Cathy she had another CC client, but didn't tell her whom. I had agreed with Cindy not to reveal that, but it was OK if I got Cathy to guessing. Cindy wanted to tell her but had not mustered the courage. Cathy would ask me questions, but I never gave her many specifics about Cindy. It was probably two months before Cindy finally told the whole truth, after which we all became pretty good friends.

Over the years Cathy and I confided to each other just about everything happening our lives, from family to politics, to cars to sex and hopes for the

future. Not only did I get pain for my money, but a counseling session too. Occasionally we went out for dinner, took in a few concerts, and went to Clippers games.

Cathy left in style: wearing a Jimmy Buffet t-shirt underneath a favorite Hawaiian shirt, holding the two tickets to the parrot-head concert she missed while hospitalized. I will miss her, she could always listen while she worked, and always had time to talk. Cathy, say hello to Bill for me, when you see him.

Adrienne Walker

Burial was on Tuesday, thank you Sarah, for informing me of her passing, for sitting with me and letting me know I was welcome to stop with the family afterwards. Thank you – The Sestito family.

Editor's Note: For those who are unaware, Catherine Houck passed away on Thanksgiving Day. She was a dear friend to the TG community for many years and will be deeply missed. However, the Sestito family has asked Pat Parmer to take over Catherine's practice. Pat worked with Catherine for many years and is a well-qualified electrologist. While no one can replace Catherine, she left us in good hands. Pat can be contacted at Catherine's original number. Details are listed on the CC website Pink Listing.

Speaking of the website – a Christmas miracle! Due to some Christmas vacation time, the website has been mostly caught up to date. The Pink List has been updated, the 2001 newsletters posted, and some general cleanup of obsolete information. Check us out!

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly... News from the TG front

Miss Manners (syndicated), November 15, 2001
Online Mailing form at:
<http://www.underwire.msn.com/Underwire/itspersona/miss/69manners.asp>

Miss Manners: Bride faces delicate situation

Dear Miss Manners: My married friends have alerted me to the pitfalls peculiar to selecting bridesmaids, but a situation involving my 21-year-old brother is

making my decision even more difficult. He has decided to undergo sexual reassignment surgery (what most people call a sex-change operation) and become a woman. My mother and I fully support his decision and believe that it is the best thing for him. (My father is deceased.) For a year before the actual surgery, my brother will live full time dressing, working and presenting himself as a woman. This trial period started about a month ago, and "Denise," (the name "she" has chosen) is off to a terrific start. Thanks to a small-boned body and a good sense of style, she doesn't have any difficulty looking like a woman. True, no one will ever mistake her for a movie star or a fashion model, but it is unlikely that anyone will ever mistake her for a man, either. She also has a full-time job and is making new friends. We have become quite close during the past few years, as I've continually expanded my role as her friend, confidante and mentor, and she's come to regard me as the most important person in her life. I would very much like her to be one of my bridesmaids. Had she been born my sister, this would be beyond debate. There are, of course, other feelings meriting consideration, making the whole situation much more complicated.

My fiance has agreed to abide by my decision but strongly prefers that she not be a bridesmaid. His reasons are justifiable. He believes that placing her in so prominent a role would detract attention from our marriage as the focus of the day's celebration. He is also afraid that it would be unduly uncomfortable for the usher who would be Denise's partner in the ceremony. My mother believes that being a bridesmaid would put too much pressure on Denise. To their credit, my future in-laws have chosen to stay out of the deliberations, but they are understandably jittery. My maid of honor, bless her, has said she would be proud to share the altar with Denise. There are also the other guests to consider, many who may not be entirely sympathetic to Denise's gender status.

Denise has admitted to being thrilled at the possibility of standing up for me. Being a bridesmaid is the kind of feminine ritual that would validate her new role in life. Nevertheless, she has assured me she would understand and accept being excluded from the wedding party. She has even volunteered to absent herself from the ceremony and the reception. Her offers are very gracious, and they would provide an

easy solution to my conundrum. But they're not what I really want. How can I say I love her and genuinely accept her as my sister, yet deny her a place at my side on the most important day of my life? After all she's been through, I'm confident that she's strong enough to get over it, but it would not be a very proud memory for me.

I'm totally at a loss as to what to do. I want to get my marriage off to a wonderful start, but I don't want to hurt Denise, my future husband, his family or our friends.

Gentle Reader: For decades now, Miss Manners has been dealing with brides whose motto is "It's my day and I can do whatever I want," and trying to get it through their thick veils that others' wishes and feelings must be taken into consideration.

This may be the first time ever that Miss Manners has had to admonish a bride that she is seeking too many opinions from her relatives and wedding guests. That you want your sister to be your bridesmaid and that she wants to do this should settle the matter. How she got to be your sister is irrelevant, as is any speculation about how people will react. Miss Manners trusts you to explain kindly to your fiance and mother that you have already made the decision and you are confident that they will support you in it, even if they do not agree.

Volume 19 Number 48
Monday, December 10, 2001
Page 1321
ISSN 1523-2832
Lead Report

Transgendered Employees When Harry Becomes Sally: Transgender Issues Increasingly Confront Employers

In 1997 Mark Horton informed his employer, Lucent Technologies, that he would like to come to the office as Mary Ann. The technology company not only accepted that Horton would sometimes present himself as a woman, but also became the first employer to amend its nondiscrimination policy to

include gender identity. An information-technology worker specializing in e-mail engineering and support, Horton spent the last three years at Lucent alternating between Mark and Mary Ann, before taking early retirement this past July. She said she was never harassed or discriminated against because of her gender switching.

"The general reaction was: 'What's the big deal?' " Horton, who now considers herself a woman full time, told BNA.

But not all transgendered employees find the path to a new gender paved with such organizational support. "They face a variety of different forms of bias," Eric Matusewitch, associate director of the New York City Equal Employment Practices Commission, said. Transgendered workers are refused employment, harassed on the job, or fired because they have changed genders, he said. When transgendered employees are open about their status, "there are high incidents of co-workers creating a hostile work environment," said Robert Heiferman, a partner in the White Plains, N.Y., office of the management law firm Jackson Lewis.

"It's certainly a problem," he said. Still, the majority of employers have yet to have a transgendered worker on their staffs. "It's relatively rare," Heiferman allowed.

So why should employers be concerned? "A growing number of people are in fact becoming transgendered," Matusewitch said. "Employers have to face the issue." "There are a lot of issues and it's a fairly new concept in many workplaces," Kim Mills, education director at the Human Rights Campaign, in Washington, D.C., told BNA.

Mills explained that in the past, employees that were going to transition from one gender to another tended to quit their jobs, undergo the process, then find a new job. Now, she explained, many are saying, "I don't need to quit my job to do this."

Transsexuals and Cross Dressers

The term transgendered covers several types of people, including transsexuals, who have a desire to change their gender and usually go through some type of transition from one sex to the other; and cross

dressers or transvestites, who derive pleasure from dressing in clothing typically associated with the opposite sex. Because cross dressers rarely feel the need to exhibit this behavior in the workplace, employees transitioning from one sex to another are the main transgender issue facing employers, said Janis Walworth, director of the Center for Gender Sanity, in Westchester, Calif., and author of *Transsexual Workers: An Employer's Guide*. According to Walworth, an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 transsexual surgeries are performed on Americans each year, and many of those who transition attempt to do so while keeping their current jobs. "So it's safe to assume that several hundred transsexual workers raise the issue of transitioning in the workplace each year," she said. "Transgendered workers must usually cope with a great deal of ignorance at all levels in their organizations," Walworth said. Managers are often afraid that a transgendered worker will disrupt the workplace and cause clients or customers to take their business elsewhere. "Not uncommonly, transsexuals lose their jobs because of these fears, even when co-workers and clients have been openly supportive," Walworth said. Employers can make life so difficult for transgendered workers that they finally quit, Walworth said. "Some [employers] allow transsexuals to transition on the job but offer no assistance, take no action against harassment, and make no effort to provide co-workers with information." On the other hand, she said, "many employers have learned to handle transition on the job without a lot of fuss."

In most successful cases, Walworth said, the transgendered worker meets with a manager and HR representative to work out the details and timing of the transition. Usually an announcement is made to other employees the transsexual deals with daily. Training may be made available to help co-workers understand what will happen and to answer their questions, Walworth said. State and Local Protection While transgendered workers face a tremendous amount of workplace bias "simply because of being transgendered," an increasing amount of legal protection is at their disposal, said Jennifer Levi, a founding member of the Transgender Law and Policy Institute.

Levi, currently a staff attorney with the Boston-based Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, said that legal protection for transgendered workers "varies tremendously depending on the jurisdiction."

Last month Denver became the latest locale to add transgendered individuals to those protected by the city's anti-discrimination law. The measure extends protections to transgendered persons in the areas of employment, as well as housing and public accommodations (19 HRR 1214, 11/12/01). More than 30 jurisdictions have passed similar non-discrimination measures. Minnesota has enacted a law providing transgender protection, and the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and opportunities has interpreted that state's law to provide protection for transgendered individuals. The cities of Seattle, Atlanta, and New Orleans, among others, have enacted comparable protections. Courts in New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts have interpreted state sex discrimination laws to include transgendered people.

Restroom Anxiety

One persistent problem facing transgendered workers is which bathroom they should use. The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled Nov. 29 that an employer's designation of employee restrooms based on biological gender did not constitute sexual orientation discrimination. In the case, Julianne Goins, born Justin Travis Goins, had presented herself as a woman since beginning to take female hormones in 1994 and had had her sex change documented by a state court. Her employer, however, refused to allow her to use the women's restroom after female co-workers had expressed concern. Reversing a state appeals court ruling in favor of Goins, the Minnesota high court ruled that the transgendered employee failed to prove that she was subjected to discrimination (*Goins v. West Group*, Minn., No. CX-00-706, 11/29/01). "What bathroom a transgendered employee should use is a very difficult issue for employers," Matusewitch said. Some female employees object to a biological male using the women's bathroom, he noted. "Workers just get freaked out over the bathroom question," Mills said. She contends that

transgendered workers should be allowed to use the restroom of the sex they are currently manifesting. "Problems tend to arise when people have misconceptions about transsexualism, such as that transsexuals are mentally unbalanced or sexually perverted," Walworth said. When these notions are dispelled through education, she said, "many people can comfortably share a restroom with a transsexual."

A Diversity Topic?

Heiferman called transgender issues "just another element of diversity." For employers unsure about whether or not to include transgender as a topic in diversity training, Heiferman said, "Why not? I'd always err on the side of being more inclusive than less inclusive." But a leading diversity expert told BNA that transgendered issues are not a part of most diversity plans. "I haven't heard much talk about that," R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr., founder of the American Institute for Managing Diversity, in Atlanta, said of transgender issues.

"For most people it's a foreign concept," said Howard Ross, president of Cook Ross Inc., a diversity consulting and training firm, in Silver Spring, Md. He noted that transgendered employees often face objections from co-workers on religious and "moralistic" grounds. "It's going to trigger homophobia in some people," Ross warned. "It's such a dramatic thing and it's so different," he said. Ross asserted that candid conversations are the key to getting employees to accept a transgendered co-worker. "It's definitely about education," Mills said. To start, she said, an employee preparing for a transition must have "a very frank discussion" with his or her supervisor. Then the employee and supervisor need to explain the situation to co-workers, Mill said. At this point, she said, the employer must stress its support of the employee and its intolerance for any harassment of that worker. "The most important thing employers can do is to send a strong message to everyone that top management is supportive of the transsexual's transition,"

Walworth said. At the same time, she said, "employees must understand that the transsexual is not being given any special privileges." Employers should stay in close contact with transsexual workers

throughout a transition, Walworth said. Include them in planning the steps of their transition at work, she said, and follow up to make sure they are not experiencing harassment or other problems.

In large corporations, training about transgender issues should be part of the broader diversity training offered regularly, according to Walworth. Smaller companies may want to bring in training only when they become aware that they have a transsexual worker, she said.

Little Coverage for Sex Reassignment Surgery

Another issue facing transgendered workers and their employers is insurance coverage for sex-change procedures. "The cost of treatment is remarkably low," Levi said. "There's no good reason not to cover sex reassignment surgery." Levi said that challenges to Medicaid exclusions of such procedures have almost always been successful. However, in the private sector, coverage is usually denied.

"The cost is negligible," Horton said. "It's even less than domestic partner benefits." As for Horton's own workplace transition, she said that she took a very methodical approach to coming out as a transgendered individual. "I had a lot of one-on-one conversations," Horton said.

Initially, Horton met with Lucent's gay, lesbian, and transgendered employee group, who were instrumental in getting the company to add gender identity to its nondiscrimination policy. She also sought out her supervisor and co-workers. "First I talked to my boss," she said. "From there it just kind of mushroomed."

By Simon J. Nadel

And now ...

Lack of space limits the ability to publish all of the ugly items this month – in the last sixty days, the editor has received e-mail's indicating that seven different TG individuals have lost their employment due to their “coming out”. One of these members is local to the Columbus community, who has lost two jobs this year just for being a TG.

At the same time, the editor has received e-mails regarding TG's who have been appointed to local boards, as well as news about communities that have passed enlightened legislation to protect the TG members.

In this time of Christmas, filled with love and hope, we can only take heart in these positive steps. May this coming year bring more good news to our community, wherever we may be located.

Upcoming Meetings**January 2002**

11 – Business Meeting

25 – Club meeting – Nomination of officers

February 2002

8 – Business Meeting

22 – Club meeting – Election of officers

March 2002

8 – Business Meeting

22 – Club meeting

Beauty Secrets
By Vicki P.

Have a beauty secret? A tip for the rest of the group? Something that speeds up the transformation? A good place to go for clothes or services? E-Mail the news editor at ccnl@tgender.net to have your tip included in next month's newsletter.

Special Contribution

Editor's Note: Many of the readers are aware of the ongoing Winn-Dixie situation, as well as a Fayetteville, NC police officer fired for being TG. The attached letter is from Meral Crane regarding this type of discrimination.

I, Meral G. Crane, M.A., LPCC, have been practicing Marriage and Family Therapy, as well as dealing with sexuality related content in my counseling. I have also a specialty on the reality of transgender in otherwise ordinary people. I have had transgender people, and some of their family members, in my client load since 1973, thus I feel I have definite authority in saying the following.

These people are from all walks of life and generally very intelligent and functional individuals. In fact, when their gender related concerns are met with respect and understanding, and when it is seen as simply an uninvited dilemma which they cope with, and when a work place shows some degree of respect, they become even more exceptional employees. They are loyal, creative and industrious.

There is absolutely no reason to discriminate against these transgender people who otherwise mind their own business and are willing to do their job. There are in fact some model food chain companies which can attest to this fact as well. Proudly, they are Kroger and Big Bear--both common chains in Columbus, Ohio. Finally, please include the Gender Program of Central Ohio among those who object to the current discrimination of Winn-Dixie.

Regards,
Meral G. Crane

The Crystal Chronicle
Information Page

Our Purpose

The Crystal Club is a non-profit social and support group for transvestites, cross dressers, transsexuals, and other transgendered individuals. Spouses and significant others are welcome and encouraged to participate. Both male-to-female and female-to-male individuals are welcome. Also, members from related organizations, helpful professionals and approved guests are welcome when cleared through a Crystal Club officer.

What to Expect at a Meeting

Except for being transgendered, participants in the club are just like other people. We dress pretty much like average people, and meet only to socialize and participate in club functions. We range in age from our 20's to our 60's, and come from a wide range of professions. Most of us are cross dressers, although several of us are transsexuals. Most of us are married and have kids, and often our spouses attend the meetings, too. Nothing of a sexual nature is permitted at any of the meetings.

You will not be criticized for how well you dress or pass. The club isn't a beauty contest. We range from hardly convincing to completely passing. Some of us dress up, some dress down. Come however you are comfortable. Our regular meetings will have a private changing room, so you may bring a change of clothing with you.

We do insist, however, that you dress either completely male or completely female. Gender-blending attire is normally not an option. We also insist that everyone behaves as ladies and gentlemen (which is more polite than simply "women and men"). Overtly sexual or obnoxious behavior is unwelcome; we don't need to exasperate the feelings of people who are already nervous!

You will not be required to reveal your legal name, or any other personal information. You can be as open or anonymous as you wish. We ALL have been newcomers and have had similar feelings. We can (and will) sympathize completely!

Membership Dues

One year membership, includes newsletter	\$42
Newsletter subscription only	\$18
Meeting Fees:	
First Timer	Free
Member (of any T group)	\$10
Member and Partner	\$15
Non-Member	\$20

Your membership renewal date is shown after your name on the mailing label. Membership fees paid on months other than January are prorated to January.

Contact Information

Postal Mail:

The Crystal Club
PO Box 287
Reynoldsburg OH 43068-0287

Screening Officers:

(614) 806-7288 (with voice mail)

Electronic Mail:

cc@tgender.net

World Wide Web Page:

<http://www.tgender.net/cc>

Contact Policy

All calls are kept strictly confidential. We do not use caller ID and will return your call only at your request. If you are still concerned about caller ID, you can block this function by pressing *67 (or dialing 1167 for rotary/pulse) before the phone number. All written inquiries are kept confidential. The newsletter is mailed in a plain, white envelope, bearing only the return PO box and no markings pertaining to the Crystal Club. The meeting location is never published, and is only disclosed after a prospective attendee has been interviewed by the screening officer.

Meeting Dates and Times

Regular meetings are held the fourth Saturday of the month, except for November and December. The doors open at about 6:30 p.m. (for those wishing to change). The meeting begins at 8:00 p.m. Refreshments are normally provided, and activities usually center around a presenter or selected topic. Several members may go to an accepting dance club or restaurant after the meeting (of course, this is optional).

A business meeting is held on the second Friday of the month. The doors open at 7:30 p.m. After the club's business is addressed, this meeting is more of a relaxed and personal discussion time than the regular meeting - a great time to get support for "real world" issues!

During the month of December, and at various other times, we will hold special activities (such as a holiday party). These will be announced in the newsletter.