

The Crystal Chronicle

Columbus, OH

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

Vol. 14 No. 10- October 2002

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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

- Nikki

While the September meeting was relatively short, the speakers were excellent. Our main speaker was Courtney Sharp, the first transgendered board member of PFLAG. Additional speakers included Vanessa Foster (National Transgender Advocacy Coalition), and Randi and Debbie Barnabee, attorneys on several GLBT issues – a special thanks these individuals for attending. The recent court decision in the Peter Oiler case (Shame on Winn-Dixie) was discussed, along with the general status of transgendered rights. Altogether it was an interesting and informative session. We had a good turnout – thanks to all of the attendees – if you missed this meeting, you missed a great set of speakers.

Courtney's main message was about cohesiveness – the need for the GLBT community to maintain a consistent front while addressing the political, legal, and social concerns facing us on a daily basis. Her second message echo's my August editorial – the need to support those on the front lines of the fight for TG rights. As was clearly indicated by the Oiler case (www.shameonwinnidixie.org), our rights as transgendered individuals are slim to non-existent. While many gains have been realized, key legislation such as ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act) remain pending, seemingly indefinitely. Again, I'm not normally one for promoting advocacy – but almost everyone I spoke to at the conference noted that EVERY congressman knew exactly how many e-mails their offices had received on a particular issue (pro and con) – they DO pay attention to their voters! The TG community has been estimated at 10-15 percent of the US population. In a time when only twenty percent of the population bothers to vote, it is conceivable that we could influence a great deal politically by simply sending an anonymous e-mail.

Moving on to the serious issues – October will be our annual costume party. Remember to wear your ghoulish worst – last year we had some awesome costumes. Who can forget the half-man/half-women getup – and Kelly's brush with the Grim Reaper (although no one else seems to have seen him???). Looking forward to a great time at our normal site. There will NOT be a meeting in November – details on our annual Christmas party will be outlined in next month's newsletter.

*The
Crystal
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On a separate issue – budget constraints limit the amount of pages we can mail on a monthly basis. As a result, our newsletter editor frequently must be very selective in the selection of articles. Over the next few months, we are planning on including these “extra” articles into the web edition of the newsletter, posted at www.tgender.net/cc. Please take look at the expanded e-news and give us your feedback. I would also like to know if individuals would be interested in receiving the newsletter via email (instead of paper) in exchange for a reduced rate on their annual dues. With postage continuously increasing, it would be nice to harness the available technology to keep our mailing costs down. If you are a group receiving this newsletter it might make distribution to your membership very easy. Let me know your thoughts on this proposal at nikkim@tgender.net.

U.S. Supreme Court rejects transsexual's claim

By DAWN BORMANN
The Kansas City Star

Avoiding the same-sex marriage debate, the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday rejected transsexual J'Noel Gardiner's claim to half of her late husband's \$2.5 million estate.

The high court turned away her appeal on the first of the new Supreme Court term. The decision ends a four-year battle over the estate of Marshall Gardiner between the Leavenworth man's only son, Joe Gardiner, and J'Noel Gardiner.

The decision upholds a unanimous March ruling from the Kansas Supreme Court that J'Noel is a man under Kansas law and therefore not entitled to share in the estate of her late husband.

Marshall Gardiner was a widower and former stockbroker. He was 85 when he met 40-year-old J'Noel Ball, an assistant professor of finance at Park University, in 1998. The two married in September that year.

Marshall Gardiner died without a will in August 1999. Under Kansas law, half of the estate goes to the spouse and half to the other heirs. Joe Gardiner

argued that he should have the entire estate because J'Noel Gardiner remained recognize same-sex unions.

Small Pennsylvania Town Enacts GLBT Equality (PA,US)

In a town described as "Rockwellian," the New Hope Borough Council voted last night for passage of a measure that would protect its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens from discrimination in employment, housing and access to public accommodations.

New Hope, a bedroom community of Philadelphia with approximately 1,400 residents, passed the new ordinance with a unanimous vote at the September 10 council meeting.

OutFront, a Philadelphia-based gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender advocacy group, and the Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights, an education, legal services and legislative police resource, were instrumental in developing the language for New Hope Ordinance 2002-4. This came on the heels of Outfront-led coalition to have gender identity added to the nondiscrimination language of Philadelphia's Fair Practices code in early May.

Randy Flagler, an attorney for Flagler & Yockey, a member on the New Hope Borough Council, worked with OutFront and the Center for Lesbian & Gay Civil Rights, to craft the final version of the ordinance.

New Hope's vote reaffirms the community's "history of tolerance and acceptance for members of their LGBT community," commented Doug Shaps, executive director of OutFront.

"The New Hope Borough Council should be praised for taking proactive steps toward fairness and justice," said Stacey Sobel, executive director of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights.

Not content to sit on their victory, the New Hope borough council hopes to lead by example and encourage protection from discrimination in other communities and across Pennsylvania. "New Hope, the Little Town that Roared, sends a loud clear message through a resolution and an ordinance," said borough council member Geri Delevich, original sponsor of the resolution. "This ordinance is about

dignity and respect."

New Hope council member Randy Flagler also proposed a companion bill according to Kathy Padilla, board member for both the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) and Outfront - whose efforts produced the successful vote.

Flagler's proposal "would require immediately updating the borough's employment guidelines to reflect the new law," reported Padilla, "and would send a copy of the ordinance to all other municipalities in the state, encouraging them to pass similar legislation."

It's time for the community of New Hope to stand tall and lead the way," said the Rev. Charles Stevens of the Unitarian Universalist Church in New Hope during the council meeting. Underscoring that, officials from neighboring Norristown and Doylestown were in attendance at the borough council meeting last night, getting tips for their own potential ordinances.

The sentiment in the Bucks County borough with the 'Norman Rockwell' appearance was unquestioningly supportive. After the borough council meeting at the local High School, where according to Padilla of NTAC, even the Chief of Police testified in favor of the measure, the mood was celebratory. While such laws are common in larger cities, New Hope is the first "small town" to approve such a law, state officials said.

New Hope becomes the seventh municipality in Pennsylvania to have non-discrimination ordinances protecting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered its citizens.

"We view the passage of this as a celebration," said an ebullient council member Delevich after the vote. "We can now proudly say 'with liberty and justice for all.'"

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.

Call to Action! : Baltimore Discrimination Bill

For all of you who live, work, or spend your entertainment dollars in Baltimore City... please take a few minutes to send a letter to Baltimore City Council President, Sheila Dixon, in support of Council Bill 02-0857 to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or expression.

We've made it so easy for you! You don't even have to pay for postage. Here's how:

- Visit the Free State Justice website at <http://www.freestatejustice.org/Baltobill.html>

Click the linkTake Action!

- Read the instructions, then click on Send a Letter.

This link takes you to a form letter. Read it, and if you agree with it, fill in your contact information, be sure to click on the Authorization button, and click Submit. Free State Justice will use your authorization (only this once, never again) to place your proxy signature on the letter, generate the letter in hard copy, and deliver it to Council President Dixon.

Could advocacy be any easier???

ACLU Criticizes Decision in Louisiana Transgendered Case (LA,US)

NEW ORLEANS - Late yesterday afternoon, a United States District Judge decided that the federal ban on sex discrimination does not apply to people who are transgendered. He then dismissed Peter Oiler's case against the Winn-Dixie grocery store chain, even though Winn-Dixie never claimed that Oiler's off-the-job cross-dressing interfered with his work in any way.

Almost 15 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court said

that laws against sex discrimination prevent employers from firing a person who doesn't act 'like a man' or 'like a woman.' But that, the ACLU said, is just what Winn-Dixie did. 'We believe that courts will reject the idea that only some people are protected from discrimination based on stereotypes about sex,' said Ken Choe, staff attorney with the ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project.

Some courts already have moved past this cramped reading of civil rights law, Choe said. Two states and about 40 cities have guaranteed that more courts will do likewise by passing laws that specifically forbid discrimination based on gender identity. In addition to that, more than 100 private employers have included gender identity in their employment nondiscrimination policies.

Peter Oiler had worked for Winn-Dixie for 21 years, during which he showed up for work on time, did a good job, and followed all the rules, but in January of 2000 he was fired because he cross-dresses off-duty. Oiler and his wife Shirley lost their health insurance, and nearly lost their home. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a federal lawsuit on Peter's behalf, charging that Winn-Dixie violated state and federal sex discrimination laws.

'Discrimination based on gender identity is just as foolish and wrongheaded as all the other practices that deny people jobs and homes on account of something that has no bearing on ability or work ethic,' said Joe Cook, executive director of the Louisiana ACLU. 'Sooner or later,' he added, 'courts will recognize that people who do their jobs well should not lose their jobs simply because they are transgendered. But people like Peter Oiler will suffer until that day comes. We should speed the process by passing federal and state laws now that specifically forbid gender identity discrimination.'

The case is Peter Oiler v. Winn-Dixie Louisiana, Inc. Civil Action No. 00-3114 (Sect. 'I'). The ACLU's complaint in the case can be found at: http://www.aclu.org/court/oiler_v_winndixie.html.

**Chris Hampton, Public Education Associate
Lesbian & Gay Rights Project and AIDS Project
American Civil Liberties Union**

**125 Broad Street, New York, NY 10004
(212) 549-2673 voice, (212) 549-2650 fax**

CONTACT:

Chris Hampton, ACLU, (212) 549-2673

Joe Cook, ACLU of Louisiana, (504) 522-0628

Transgendered Community is Supported by Stonewall

Stonewall has made a room available to members of the TG Community that need a safe, free place to change. For more information please contact Angie Wellman at 614-299-7764.

Stonewall is also hosting a Free Support Group, the normal meetings are at 7:00pm on the First Wednesday of the month.

This is an opportunity for members of the TG Community to come together in a Safe & Secure atmosphere to air their concerns, make new friends, as well as, have a place where they can feel free to be themselves.

Meral Crane is the facilitator of the group, she welcomes all interested people to attend.

Editorial Note:

Even though the above article has been running for sometime in the Newsletter. I feel it is still important information.

Gwen

Buffalo Common Council Extends Protections

On Tuesday September 17, 2002 Buffalo NY, known as the 'City of Good Neighbors,' proved its heart. In a near unanimous vote, the Common Council of the City of Buffalo extended protection against discrimination in employment and housing to transgendered persons. Mayor Anthony Masiello has announced that he will sign the amendments into law.

The amendments adding protection for "gender identity and expression" were initiated and sponsored by Councilman Antoine Thompson, who said, "It's another step to break from Buffalo's past and encourage tolerance and diversity."

Earlier this year, Councilman Thompson gathered a group of community leaders to help draft amendments to Buffalo's anti-discrimination laws. Although "sexual orientation" was already included under existing laws, the Anti-Discrimination Advisory Group felt that the phrase "gender identity and expression" needed to be explicitly included as a protected class.

The amendments garnered widespread support, bridging across divisions of race and sexual orientation. Organizations supporting the amendments included: Men of Color Health Awareness Project (MOCHA), New York State Transgender Coalition, Stonewall Democrats, and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).

"In my outreach and education efforts throughout the Buffalo area, I often encounter transgender individuals who are in constant fear of losing their job, their apartment or being the victim of a hate crime," said Camille Hopkins, a City Hall employee and male to female transsexual. Hopkins testified before City Council that she had lost her apartment simply because her landlord did not like transgendered persons. "I just want to live an ordinary life," she finished, "without fear of reprisal from those who want me to disappear."

Speakers on behalf of the amendments included Carol Speser, founder of Western New York Stonewall Democrats, and Lana Bentovich, Executive Director, National Conference of Community and Justice. Ms Bentovich, who is also a member of Buffalo's Commission on Citizens' Rights and Community Relations stated, "If we are going to be the City of Good Neighbors that we have been described as for decades, this is one way of showing what we are."

"I am thrilled over the passage of this Gender Identity and Expression Amendment," exclaimed Buffalo resident Joy Schroeder in response to the successful ordinance vote. Schroeder, a male to female transsexual, added, "I believe this is a big first step towards bringing equality and protection from the

injustices that we face every day of our lives."

Gwendilyne's Editorial

I would like to thank all the good folks of **PFLAG** for making a place for us & including us in there conference held here in Columbus last month.

Although our meeting was shorter then I would have liked, I enjoyed meeting each & every one of you.

I look forward to working together with you in our Quest for Equal Rights under the Law. in the Future.

On Another Note:

I would like to encourage everyone who reads this to make your voices heard.

Things will not change unless we make our feelings & wishes known.

Legal presidents set in other states will effect us too!

Send these people in places of power an email, (do it anonymously) let them know how you feel about what they are doing.!

We have made some progress, but, we have miles to go, & there are those whom would still just Love to take away what we have already accomplished.

So Lets get to it Ohio! We are the Heartland of America! Speak Out! NOW IS THE TIME!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 2002

11 Business Meeting

26 Club Meeting - Halloween Party

November 2002

Thanksgiving Break / No Meeting

December 2002

Christmas Break / No Meeting /

Jan. 2002 to be announced

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
One year membership, email newsletter only	\$30
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.