



# GIRL TALK

Powder Puffs of California — Serving the California Gender Community Since 1987

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## July Meeting: YES!

Yes, we are having a July meeting. Exactly what will take place is unbeknownst to me (see AOL article). However, before my software gave up the ghost, so to speak, I was assured that planning for July was proceeding.

So, there is no need to say at home dressed in DRAB paying money to run your air conditioning. Come on out to the Placentia Holiday Inn and enjoying the evening dressed in your femme finery, have a bite to eat, and socialize the night away with friends.

**Date:** Sat, July 17th, 1999

**Time:** 8:00 pm PDT

**Place:** Placentia Holiday Inn, 118 E. Orangethorpe Ave, Placentia, CA. Take 57 Fwy to Orangethorpe exit. Head east.

## AOL: America Offline - Even Fry's Electronics is Helpless

At the end of June, I went offline. America Online decided it wasn't in their shareholders, and hopefully, their customers best interest best interest to continue to support archaic, Smithsonian-like system like my old Mac. They quit supporting the old AOL software which I was running.

True, I could have upgraded. I had been given plenty of warning. But it meant spending more money in an old system than I wished. While the earnings continued to come rapidly; my paycheck came at its usual a-day-late-and-several-dollars-short pace.

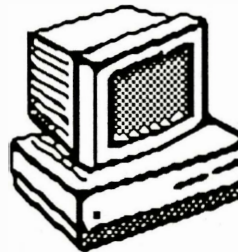
Unfortunately also, I didn't get another provider for my e-mail until too late. Thus, I missed a lot of the information from Diane, Dee, and Joan.

So what does this mean to you?

I mean that the July newsletter will be a bit brief. Hopefully I will be able to find a way to cheaply upgrade my old Mac before long. This will then serve as a stopgap measure until I could afford a bright, new, shiny computer which will become obsolete about 3 months later.

Pentium? Celeron? AMD? Cyrix? Apple?

Those are the questions that occupy my mind now.



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## A Gender Bender

by Charlene Baldrige, Press-Enterprise  
June 18, 1999

There's nothing more uppity than a queen, and we're not talking royalty here.

The New York supper club Lips, whose motto is "Where the boys are men . . . and so are the girls!," recently opened a new West Coast restaurant on Fifth Avenue (in San Diego), midway between the downtown Gaslamp Quarter and the Hillcrest high life.

They call it "gender illusion."

Lips partner Mark Zschesche, a transplanted Georgia boy who transforms by night into a tall, stunningly attired and dulcet-toned Yvon Lame', expounded on the concept.

"We are the Planet Hollywood or Hard Pock Cafe of drag," he said while conducting a tour through the restaurant's interior, decorated by one Brenda Starr.

Festooned with ostrich-egg sized jewels, photos and memorabilia of famous and not-so famous drag queens, the restaurant is the ultimate in tacky. There are ostrich plumes as well, worn by drag-queen mannequins with an attitude. Memorabilia include contributions from Boy George, Ru Paul, and Divine. Scenes from old Bette Davis films, the Southern epic "Gone With the Wind" and the catty television drama "Dynasty" play continuously on video monitors over the bar.

"When it's showtime," said Zschesche, "I turn on the lights, the disco balls (seven of them) come down, and the music comes on."

our waitress may suddenly run to the stage, lipsync a tune made famous by Bette Midler or Barbra Streisand (the place needs better stage lighting or a follow-spot), and then return slightly dewy with your entree. In the time it takes to eat a leisurely meal, one might see two shows. Most of the "girls" are lip-synch experts; some are excellent dancers as well. To say that all are drop-dead gorgeous would be a lie. The shows host, Cashetta, is built like a steamer

trunk, which suits her brassy comic style.

Portions of Wednesday nights are devoted to Bitchy Bingo, for which each patron receives a free bingo card. On a recent Wednesday, Lame' and Cashetta took turns turning the crank and calling, "Next ball up is . . ."

The fur did fly. Cashetta referred to Lame' as "tragically untalented." Lame responds by asking what it's called when Cashetta and her mother take a bath together? The answer: Gorillas in the Mist.

The menu is described as "continental eclectic." Recommended are Lypsinka (Maine lump crab cakes with sweet pepper corn salsa and chile pepper sour cream, &6.95) and Raven-O (a roasted garden beet salad, with mixed greens, gorgonzola cheese crouton, toasted walnuts and sherry vinaigrette, \$5.50). Of the entrees I've tried recently, the best is Cashetta (herb crusted salmon with mashed potatoes, diced vegetables and roasted tomato broth, \$15.50).

How does a macho man feel, knowing his waitress is a fella who frolics in finery?

"Pardon me, sir," asked the intrepid reporter. "I assume you are a heterosexual male."

"That's correct," said John Travis, USN.

Travis and his wife, Moraya, just transferred to San Diego and heard about Lips on a local PBS radio program. Travis seemed perfectly at ease with the reality and illusion of the situation. "I've wanted to do something like this for a long time," said the Utah native.

Lip-goers are a mixed crowd, subsequent visits revealed. Birthdays are big, because each birthday boy or girl becomes queen for a minute, crowned and taken on stage to be photographed with the performers — a great souvenir to show Uncle Mason from Nebraska.

One recent evening, the diners included heterosexual couples and a large group showing the local scene to a friend from Australia. There were even a few local,

*Please see LIPS, Page 5*

## COSTLY TRANS-ACTION

Advocate (The national gay & lesbian  
newsmagazine)

By Todd Savage and Lisa Neff

May 25, 1999:64.

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WITH REASSIGNMENT SURGERY EXPENSES AS HIGH AS \$50,000 SOME TRANSEXUALS MUST DECIDE BETWEEN WHAT THEY NEED AND WHAT THEY CAN AFFORD

Some people sock money away in a 401k to buy a home or save for retirement. Over the five years she worked for a Chicago-area electronics corporation, Rachael Zuniga amassed a nest egg of \$20,000. Now she's used her savings to cover the bill for the gender-reassignment surgery she had scheduled for May 4.

Zuniga is one of the lucky ones. She's cleared one of the biggest hurdles in making a gender-related transition. "Otherwise, I couldn't afford it," says Zuniga, who now works as an administrative assistant at Howard Brown Health Center, a gay and lesbian community health agency in Chicago.

But there have been some lean times. Zuniga, who was born a biological male, estimates that since she started making the transition a few years ago, her credit card bills have topped \$15,000. She had 200 hours of electrolysis--costing from \$30 to \$65 per hour--to eliminate facial hair. Since her insurance didn't cover the cost, she says, she could afford the treatments only by putting gas, rent, and other living expenses on a credit card.

"There were times that I didn't eat properly for a few months [and times] I paid less money on bills than I should have," Zuniga says. "I ended up going a lot into debt because this was so important. I'm going to spend 20 years paying off what I've already spent."

Before they invest any money in health care, transsexuals such as Zuniga often spend years, even decades, of their lives sorting out the complex internal and social issues associated with their gender identification. But once they've grown to understand themselves, told their families and friends, and begun living as their self-identified gender, they also must be prepared to face enormous

medical expenses.

"It's another thing that makes you feel way out there and isolated and alone," says Michael Munson, a female-to-male transsexual computer consultant living in Milwaukee. "It adds to that feeling of isolation."

For most, that means going it alone to pay for the treatments and surgeries themselves. That's because most insurers do not provide reimbursement for transsexual surgeries, which they consider elective--"even though you may be ready to blow your brains out because your body doesn't match your brains," says Alex Dionne, a female-to-male transsexual who lives in Cambridge, Mass., and who asked that his real last name not be used to protect his family's privacy.

The cost of transition-related health care includes a wide range of services and treatments. Male-to-female transitions can cost anywhere from \$18,000 to \$35,000, while female-to-male reassignments are far more expensive since a phalloplasty (in transsexual does not require that all (or any) of these surgeries be performed, the following reassignment surgery procedures are options for transsexuals:

### MALE-TO-FEMALE

**VAGINOPLASTY:** Involves removing the testicles and the inside of the penis and then inverting the penis skin to create a vagina.

**ADAM'S APPLE SHAVING:** Surgery done under local anesthesia to decrease the size of the Adam's apple.

**VOICE SURGERY:** Procedure that scars the vocal chords to modify the voice's pitch.

**BREAST AUGMENTATION:** Saline-filled implants are inserted under the existing breasts.

### FEMALE-TO-MALE

**BILATERAL MASTECTOMY:** The removal of breast tissue and reduction of nipple size to form a male chest.

**PHALLOPLASTY:** Construction of a penis using skin, nerves, veins, and arteries from other parts of the patient's body. The labia may be used to construct the



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scrotum. Clitoral nerves are usually preserved and may eventually grow into the new penis. Testicular implants and implants to obtain an erection can be inserted in subsequent procedures. Urethral extension is also possible.

**METAIDIOPLASTY:** An individual whose clitoris responds sufficiently to testosterone may have the clitoris released from its hood and the shaft "finished" along the bottom side, completing the foreskin. The resulting small penis is also raised about one centimeter forward on the body. The labia are also raised and fused in the center to form the scrotum through use of testicular implants. This procedure retains natural erectile capacity. The patient can elect to have the vaginal cavity closed and/or the urethra extended through the penis.

**HYSTERECTOMY/OOPHORECTOMY:** The removal of female reproductive organs and gonads.

--Jon Barrett

#### RELATED ARTICLE: DR. COMPASSION

#### ONE SURGEON'S WORK HAS MADE RESIDENTS OF A SMALL COLORADO TOWN EXPERTS ON TRANSEXUALISM BY LISA NEFF

Each week two or three people take the "road to Trinidad" to meet the doctor of their dreams--Stanley Biber.

Biber is one of the world's leading gender-reassignment surgeons. His pioneering practice has drawn more than 4,000 people to the town of Trinidad, Colo., to undergo gender-reassignment surgery over the past 30 years.

Biber performed his first reassignment surgery in 1969 after a social worker, who brought her children to his office for checkups, asked, "Can you do my surgery?" Says Biber: "I said, 'Sure, what do you want done?' She said, 'I'm a transsexual.' I said, 'What is that?'"

Biber quickly learned the definition of transsexual and, guided by drawings supplied by a surgeon at Johns Hopkins Hospital, performed his first reassignment surgery--a penile-scrotal flap, or inversion of the organs.

In the three decades since his first operation, Biber has performed 3,800 male-to-female procedures and 350 female-to-male operations in Trinidad's 70-bed Mount San Rafael Hospital. "The grapevine is so strong," he says.

Gender-reassignment surgery accounts for only about 20% of Biber's practice, but the doctor who lacked a knowledge of transsexualism in 1969 understands very well the arduous journey his patients make.

"You develop a lot of empathy for these patients," he says. "These people have been in hiding all their life. They've been hit on the head so many times before they come here."

Biber came to Trinidad in 1954 to work at a United Mine Workers of America clinic after serving as an Army surgeon in the Korean War and at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, Colo. "I thought I'd be here for a year or two," he recalls.

But Biber remained, building his practice, raising a family of nine children with his wife, and operating a cattle ranch. "I get out in the open country and chase my little cows around," says Biber, whose devotion to ranching is equal to his passion for surgery.

As Biber's reputation as a surgical pioneer has grown, so has the fame of Trinidad. Situated on the front wall of the Rockies about 200 miles south of Denver, Trinidad emerged as a wild cattle town in 1842. Today, with a population of about 9,000, Trinidad is still the Old West. Brochures promote the town as "a pocket of peace, plentiful clean air, and pure Western Americana."

But Trinidad also is known as the "sex-change capital of the world." Biber chuckles at this moniker as well as the nickname so many of his patients adopt for themselves--"Biber girls." "That doesn't emanate from us," he says of the nicknames. He then asserts that Trinidad is not ashamed of his work or its contemporary claim to fame.

"My people are so sophisticated," Biber boasts of Trinidadians. "They're all experts on transsexualism. They understand better than anybody in the world because they live with these people. The understanding came from exposure."

Neff is national news editor at Chicago's Windy City Times. Savage is a regular contributor to the Chicago Tribune.

## West Hollywood Sheriff Show TG Sensitivity

By Shirley Bushnell

For further information contact

shirley@earthlink.net

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The transgender community has been meeting with the West Hollywood Sheriff's Conference Committee (Lesbian and Gay Advisory Committee) for the past 6 months to talk about transgender issues and the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Station is sensitive to the issues of the Gay and Lesbian community and has shown a great deal of sensitivity to the Transgender Community as well.

The Transgender Community and the West Hollywood Sheriff's Department realized that the relation could be strengthened. Captain Odenthal is expanding transgender sensitivity for the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station. This will be accomplished by a series of meeting between Captain Odenthal and the Transgender Community. From these meetings ideas of presenting transgender sensitivity at rolls calls will be implemented. Plus the idea of doing ride alongs to places frequented by transgenders to improve relations between the police and the transgender community.

Captain Odenthal of the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station made sure that transgendered people were included in the Sheriff's Hate Crime policy. This policy was in effect before the new California State Law defined gender to include transgendered persons.

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### Fashion Maven? Quiz Time

1. What one accessory will give your overall image an instant dramatic update?

- a. A print scarf
- b. A Prada backpack
- c. A feather boa

## LIPS

*Continued from Page 2*

decked-out drag queens hoping for stardom.

Regardless of your gender and gender identification, take a sense of humor. And if it's your birthday, be forewarned.

Lips is located at 2770 Fifth Ave. for more information call (619) 295-7900.

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2. The hippest way to wear a diamond among celebrities is:

- a. In the hair
- b. In the navel
- c. On a thin nearly invisible string around the neck

3. The newest part of your body not to leave bare is:

- a. Ankle
- b. Ears
- c. Neck

4. What accessories are suddenly showing up everywhere on television and in films?

- a. Big rings
- b. Lavaliers
- c. Barrettes and bobbie pins

5. You can afford one new pair of shoes for your professional wardrobe. You should choose:

- a. A pointed-toe pump with little heel
- b. A round-toe basic pump
- c. Anything you find comfortable and pretty with a professional closed-toed look.

#### ANSWERS:

1. c. A boa is a new touch to enliven a black dress, say, or a turtleneck and trousers.

2. c. Check out celebrities such as Halle Berry and Drew Barrymore. You will see a floating diamond in the center of their neckline.

3. c. As jewelry comes back, necklaces are returning

4. c. Short hair gets spiffed up with decorations as fancy as jeweled barrettes and as simple as bobbie pins.

5. c. Closed toes look most professional for the office. Otherwise, it is your call.

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**Jim Bridges Boutique**, 12457 Ventura Blvd., Ste. 103, Studio City, CA, 818-761-6650

**Shana's**: Shirely & Faye's designer clothing and fashion accessories. Discount prices. Call 949-854-4562

**Lydia's T.V. Fashions**, "Where Your Feminine Experience Begins," 13837 Ventura Blvd. Ste. 2, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423, 818-995-7195, M-W 12-7, Th-Sat 11-8

**My Secret Place**, "A Specialty Consignment Store for Size 14+ Women Only," 188662 Beach Blvd., #116, Huntington Beach, CA 92646 (between Ellis & Garfield), 714-963-4743.

**Albert's Hosiery Stores**, Full-fashioned stockings — special occasion hosiery, 6336 Hollywood Blvd. (Hollywood & Vine) Hollywood, CA 90028, 213-465-2834, mail orders accepted.

**Second Time Around**, "Distinctive Consignment Apparel for the Upscale Shopper," Jonella Tescone 298 E. 17th St., #B, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, 714-642-4700.

**De 'An Drew Designs**, Stockings & Pantyhose, 8884 Warner Ave., Suite 172, Fountain Valley, CA 92708.

**Sizes Unlimited**, specializing in sizes 14 and up, 5187 Lakewood Blvd. (next to Chucky Cheese) in Lakewood across from the Lakewood Mall, 310 634-2054. Ask for Rey between 9 to 3.

### **JEWELRY**

**Jewels by Parklane**, Specializing in the highest quality ladies fashion jewelry — unconditionally guaranteed (ask about our \$100 free shopping spree for \$10), Jeani Adams, 714-533-4662.  
website: [www.jewelsbyparklanesocal.com](http://www.jewelsbyparklanesocal.com)

**Cookie Lee**, Fine fashion jewelry — home & office shows, Genie Lalama, 818-246-2197 (by appointment).

### **MEDICAL SERVICES**

**Shirely Lampert, M.A., MFC**, Professor of Human Sexuality, Psychotherapist, ASSET AND AMERICAN BOARD OF SEXOLOGY. Certified Sex Therapist. Specializing in working with the TS & TV community. (714) 833-7810, 1151 Dove St., Ste 105, Newport Beach, CA 92660

**Brad Taylor, M.A., MFCC**, 360 N. Bedford Drive, Suite 215, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, sliding scale. (310) 247-9955

**Transgender Counseling & Research Center**, 4545 Park Blvd., Ste. 207, San Diego, CA 92116, 619-929-2721, Jan Eder, Psy. D., Educator & Research Director.

**Patricia Wojdowski**, M.S.W. Licensed Clinical Social Worker, 4926 La Cuenta Drive, Ste. 200, San Diego, CA 92124, 619-292-0492

**Dr. Richard F. Docter, Ph.D.**, 17162 Sunburst St, Northridge CA 91325, 818-349-9709

**Regal Opticians**, 2402 W. 6th Street, LA, CA 90057, 231-382-7606.

**Dr. T. Adam Coteson, M.D.**, Psychiatrist Providing Therapy, Medications, 116 roberston Blvd., Suite 702, Los Angeles, CA 90048, 310-659-8640, FAX 310-659-8642 (by appointment)

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### **ELECTROLYSIS & SKIN CARE**

**Kathryn Robbins Electrolysis & Skin Care**, located in Yorba Linda, 714-692-2747.

**Beach Electrolysis by Gwen & Judy**, 350 N. Sepulveda, Manhattan Beach, 310-318-9747.

**Dana Point Electrology**, 34213 Pacific Coast Hwy, Ste. G, Dana Point, CA 92629, 714-240-7709.

**Layla's Electrolysis & Artistic Beauty**, Westwood CA, 310-236-1010

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**World of Wigs**, A Full Service Salon, 2305 E. 17th St, Santa Ana CA, 92701, 714-547-4461

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**Sylvia's Wigs**, 2612 S. Bristol St., Corner of Bristol & Central, Santa Ana, CA 714-545-1307

**Jenny's Wigs**, 384 S. Tustin Ave, Eldorado Plaza, Orange CA 714-771-3883

**Judy's Creative Hair Design**, 1815 W. Orangethorpe, Fullerton, CA 92633, 714-773-0200

**Fantastic Hair & Nail Design**, 11851 Gilbert St., #105, Garden Grove, CA 92641 (corner of Gilbert & Costco St.), 714-539-8020, Nancy Rodriguez is available on Wednesdays & Saturdays only.

**Mary Kay**, Terri Davis — Independent Professional Beauty Consultant, 4607 Ostrom Ave., Lakewood, CA 90713, 310-420-9933.

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**Classic Curves**, "Get the Maximum Curvature with a minimum of Effort," foundations by Espy Lopez, 2620 Carson St., Ste 55, 310-549-8787.

**Waist and Stays Cosetry**, The Goddess Shoppe, "Serving the Needs of the Craft," Erin Rado and Paul Rado — Owners, Phone: (800) 777-1185 Office), (714) 579-7514 (FAX), P.O. Box 6399, Fullerton, CA 92634-6399, <http://www.primenet.com/~goddess>, e-mail [goddess@goddess.com](mailto:goddess@goddess.com)

**Victoria's Institute** Hair, Skin, Body Non-Surgical Corrective Treatment 7360 Center Ave Huntington Beach, CA 92647 714-379-6156

**Nighty's and Naughty's**, 16112 Harbor Blvd., Fountain Valley, CA 92708. E-Mail @ [Naughty@wdc.net](mailto:Naughty@wdc.net)

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**OZZ Supperclub**, Restaurant, Hi-tech Danceclub, Cabaret Lounge, 6231 Manchester Blvd, Buena Park CA, 714-522-1542