

TRANS SPIRITUALITY

A TRANS-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Issue 06

Spring 2007

TransInjustice

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Light Upon These Dark

Institutionalized Injustice

**TransInjustice
Website Launched**

**TransAction idea
Feedback**

Plus much more...

TRANS SPIRITUALITY
A TRANS-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

“Ideologies separate us. Dreams and anguish bring us together.”

~ Eugene Ionesco (1912-1994)
Romanian-French dramatist

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Our 05 "Anniversary Issue" was just a teeny bit less than I'd hoped for. Why? There was no mention of the fact anywhere that this 05 issue was indeed a very special "milestone issue" that signals the birth and longevity of our beloved zine. I expected a celebration edition, magnifying all of the points, views, people, and voices that created the dialogue that became our publication – christened *Trans Spirituality*.

Other than the opinion voiced above, all in all, our *anniversary* issue was very much so appreciated, and continues to be an undeniable blessing to me.

I must say again, "Good job, ladies," to our editor and distributor, Steph and Amanda, for going above and beyond!

Thanks, ladies, for having such caring and loving spirits. As for our other contributors, keep the dreams alive, and our family growing...

Lovingly yours,
As We Live True...
Valjean

Steph,

Hey Girl! Got your letter tonight.... The things you're out there doing is amazing. And to know my face is one of the few whom a whole group of people at

the college had seen is completely an overwhelming feeling. I can only imagine what kind of intro you gave as you introduced each photo. I'm sure my picture got a few gasps of amusement... "And this is Natasha... my 'Gothic/Satanic/Vampyre/Transgendered' friend, who is a bit 'eccentric.'" All I can say, love, is "Wow!" You, Steph, are such an awesome person. I can't wait to give you a big hug and a nip on the neck.

I hope you're well rested and your cell phone is back on queue, but sounds like you had a wonderful time, although busy. I can't even imagine being at your side as your assistant at such a gathering of sort. Way cool, love.

Everything in issue 05 was really explosive, if you ask me. And I think this will get a big response. I'm looking forward to hearing the feedback. My only complaint was you really can't see my baby Dracula... (*Ed.- No, that wasn't a ghost of a cat, that was a ghost of a print job!*) I miss him so much!

Well, I hope you will find this contribution useful. I don't get much money, love. I wish I could do more. It's only 5 stamps, k? (*Ed.- Thanks, Natasha! That's 5 more stamps than I had yesterday.*)

Until 'necks' time,
♥ Natasha ♥

TRANS SPIRITUALITY is a quarterly zine for demonstrating how the transgender experience includes a rich spiritual dimension. Our initial focus is how T* inmates are finding incredible ways to apply their spirituality to the challenges of living in a gender-oppressed environment. If their spirituality proves effective for dealing with the challenges they face each day, what does that say about how *we* are integrating our spirituality into *our* daily transgender experience?

TRANS SPIRITUALITY is a public forum for expressing diverse views. Such views are the responsibility of those who express them. These published views are not necessarily those of Jen Durr Press, its staff, or the Founding Corps of the TRD. *Or represent the current views of those who wrote them, since every woman is free to change her mind!*

TRANS SPIRITUALITY is open to submissions. Material can be submitted to: Steph Turner, **TRANS SPIRITUALITY** Editor, 3204A University Student Apartments, Rochester MI 48309.

We prefer to receive submissions online, at jendurrpress@gmail.com. Material may be edited for space and continuity. Unsolicited material by snail mail cannot be returned without a SASE. Please request our *writer's guidelines*. Payment to writers is a copy of the issue in which the material appears. All rights reserved.

TRANS SPIRITUALITY is currently available for free to anyone who asks and if we have enough funds and copies to distribute. Donations always welcomed.

TRANS SPIRITUALITY
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FEATURES

Feature message from our sister Bella Donna Night Raven

Dearest Friends,

Hi! I hope this letter finds you well. I got the late issue of the TS-TRD and was very well pleased with it. I hope to have something to contribute for the next issue by the February deadline. (*Ed.- obviously, she made it.*) I have survived another Yule tide season. And so begins the New Year (secular) for some. Mine began on or about Samhein (11/1/06 C.E.). So I got a bit of a head start on you all. ☺ (*Ed.- And mine begins on the first day of spring, so happy spiritual new year!*)

I have been blessed by the Goddess in the form of an extension of time to file in the U.S. Supreme Court, so if my next submission is a bit skimpy or short please forgive me for I am a bit pressed. But a lot can happen between now and the deadline. So we shall see how the Spirits move me.

SPIRIT

Does the “Spirit” move me? Does it move others? Are all spirits good? How do we/I find a good one, exclude the bad, and make the spirit a part of our lives? As a twin “Spirit” we are in many ways blessed and in many ways cursed (by others, not by the “Spirit”).

I call my “Spirit” the Goddess, I worship and pray to Her as others do to their “God” I met the Goddess a long time ago in my life. But as happened to many of us. I lived in a world that did exclude the Goddess, and punished those who tried to emulate Her. Especially those who did so outside their born gender.

My Goddess was a persistent sort of “Spirit” and would not leave me alone. As I am sure has happened to many of you, I was caught between the demands of the “real world” and the “Spirit’s world.”

How do we as Transgender/Twin Spirit persons maintain our lives, our dignity, our spirituality in the mostly hostile world? As much as possible, I listen to that voice of the “Spirit” – My Goddess that is inside me – and I try to do what She says. I do wish that I had done so sooner.

Does this mean that we can use the “Spirit” as an excuse to act irresponsible? No, it does not. As a Spiritual Being/Person, we have to be good role models and examples to others. We must learn to discern our own inner voices (that are not always good) from that of a good “Spirit.”

The term “Free Spirit” is a good example, but one that can be and is often misused. To be free we must not be enslaved by any type of bad habit, bad person, or bad spirit. Freedom is not free, as they say. To be a true Free Spirit, we must

also be true to our Lovers, Ourselves, Our Friends, and Family.

It can be really hard to be a “Free Spirit/Twin Spirit” in the hostile environment we find ourselves in. We must put up our defenses, and shield ourselves from the physical/mental pain and hurt others try to put upon us, without cause.



That is when you need the “Spirit” the most, in your hours of need, trials, and tribulations. No matter what happens or is happening in your life. Never let

go of the “Spirit,” never let anyone take it away from you.

Wow, the time has slipped away from me. It has been a few weeks since I started this letter and the submission deadline is upon me. So I will have to wrap this letter up and send it out.

I did get a letter from my better half, who said that they saw the Trans Spirituality zine and liked it. And may even offer up a written submission.

Which would be nice. I think one of the hardest things about being Transgender is to find someone you can share it with, in a romantic way. And I have been blessed in that respect.

I have an upcoming celebration of the major Sabbat or Imbolc, which is like a pre-spring time for ritual, celebration, and

to prepare the way for spring. It is also celebrated in Ireland, and in Scotland as St. Bridget’s day. It is also known as Candle mass, and Lady day.

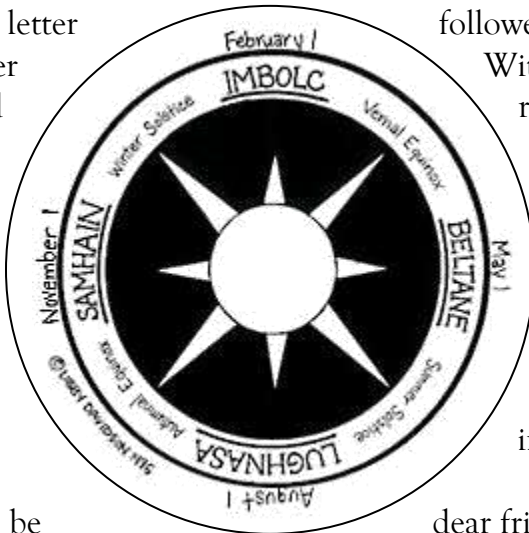
Once again, back to the great Galle/Galli controversy. I did find yet another name for them. “Corybantēs,” who were

followers of Cybelle.

With my limited research abilities I could not get a whole lot more than what has already been discussed. But I am always in search of more information.

Well, once more, dear friends, into the breach (legal work) with the cry of Habeas Corpus (Havoc) and let slip the dogs of the Law (aka war). I look forward to the next issue and I hope to see some new faces and names. Take care and blessed be.

Yours truly,
Donna



Different

Bella Donna Night Raven

You may have noticed that you are a bit different than all the other kids. It's more about who you are, than any thing you said or did.

Try not to take it personal, or let it bring you down. Instead, take this to heart. You are a very Loved and special person, and in the scheme of things, you'll play a big part.

It may be hard to be the one that doesn't fit in, but if you sold your soul to fit in and lost the better part of yourself, that would be a greater sin.


You'll take many paths, ordeals, and adventures alone. Solitude will set the tone. Just always try to remember the way home.

You'll also find some true friends along the way, ones that truly care and never your trust will they betray.

Right now it seems that every hand and body is against you, no one understands, everyone seems against you, no matter what you say or do.

Being your own person has a very high price, you'll find your self often alone. Being Yourself may not always be a virtue, but it's never a vice.

Being different makes it sometimes difficult to survive, against a lot of things you will have to strive. But in the end you'll be glad to be alive.



Feature message from our sister Natasha T'Chort

Hail & Greetings

Natasha T'Chort

"Hail Satan – My spirit... Fire.

*"Hail Lucifer – My
intelligence... Air.*

*"Hail Belial – My flesh...
Earth.*

*"Hail Leviathan/Tiamat – My
blood... Water.*

*"Hail Thine Own Self – for
without my existence, nothing
would be known unto me and
therefore matter not! But I am...I
am forever for I am Vampyre. I
feed intrepidly upon those I seek,
in psych, blood and astral spirit. I
Am Vampyre...*

*"Hail My Unholy Saint –
'Erzebet Bathory,' be mine as I am
yours. Enter me and develop me
into the woman I am in mind, body
and soul. Guide me to the ways I
desire; to destroy my enemies. And
grant me the blessings that I seek.
Show me the Bathory legacy so I*



*may live on as your transcendent
daughter.*

*"In the name of Satan, Lucifer,
Belial, and Leviathan-Tiamat...
Amen!"*

*Hail and greetings, once
again, to all my sisters and TRD.
I've reached beyond my concrete
crypt and I feel stronger. Regain
myself and shed spiritual chains
that hold me, and bring restraint,
fears and the helplessness that I*

know to be weakness and false. (Besides, I've been associating a lot with our own lovely Steph, and great things are yet to come!) I will not fade from this realm, nor will I fade from the future of my sisters and this "transspiritual" movement.

Above is a chant that each night, as the sun sets (or when they pop my slot for 'dinner') I rise, wash my hands, face and brush my hair and pearly fangs. I then bow to my altar and recite what is written...every single night!

What does this mean? Well, I'm sure there is multiple opinions. However, I'll give you the 'translation' from the source...my own self!

As many will scoff at the Vampiric Attributes, or snide at the Satanic baseness, and even abhor the praise of Bathory, I will still reveal the actual positive inwardness of the self...ego...and willpower of its meaning.

In Satanism, one of the primary factors of its baseness is 'ego.' It's a religion of the self, and the worship of the indulgence in the fleshly delights. It is also to rejoice in the existence of life, without restraints and conviction of false morals and dogma.

In this we recognize the self as the Supreme Being. One must remember as well that this law applies to all others and heed to our own actions.

In Satanism, there is but one law: "Do what thou wilt, this shall be the whole of the law." In this we recognize the self as the Supreme Being. One must remember as well that this law

applies to all others and heed to our own actions. It's only accountable upon our own selves – that no other dictates our fate, nor is any other responsible for our faults. In saying so, 'Don't tread on me.'

When we worth ourselves at this plateau, we then see ourselves as gods and goddesses amongst gods and goddesses...above all others who cannot or will not. This then kicks in the factor of 'ego.' But

what is 'ego'? There are three stages of the use, or understanding, of 'ego,' and only one of them is necessary. There are those who lack 'ego,' also called 'low self-esteem.' These people (which in my last contribution portrayed) will feel weak, helpless, unworthy or simply taught to believe this is their 'place' in existence. This can happen quite often to even strong people and can be a great thing as long as one recovers from the symptoms.

If not, we become the complete opposite end of the spectrum... 'ego-tistical,' or flat out 'full of themselves.' Such persons are not in touch with their 'ego.' In fact, they lose complete sight of their ego and create a delusional foundation of themselves.

Why? Because 'ego' is the understanding and realization of one's own capabilities, weakness and strengths; without doubt, without false pretense and without delusion. "Ego is a key factor in

any success one sets to do. 'Ego' is key in successful magick, and in every day life.

Sometimes one will set this success or desire in an outcome just a tad higher than the ego, to test and strengthen the ego. Once obtained, and success is held for a higher ego, once can hold true understanding that 'yes, I can, have, and will.' And they can

apply this realization to their ego because it's factual, understood and known. And this is the Satan, the spirit of self..ego, power, success.

'Willpower' is yet another name for a word people refuse to acknowledge; fear

of its use, be it misunderstanding or false thought or morals who teach against the word 'ego'; yet uses the term willpower. It's one and the same, love. Don't be misled. Find it for yourself, use it, understand it and you will be empowered with ego. The complete



understanding of one's own self and capabilities.

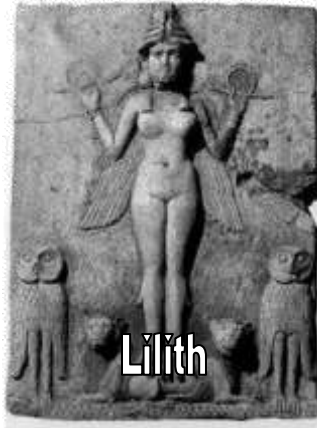
In Magick/Ritual (etc.), ego - willpower - desire and focus is used with timing and direction to open the realities of success.

We 'cast' our working and go seek the open gates, and the physical self will continue and complete what our magick has started. We don't sit by and wait for the check to come in the mail for work we never achieved outside of ritual.

We go look for the job that will be set in open hallows for us that our ego, willpower, has us knowing we can obtain, possess and successfully work. While others think: Nay, who are you to

gain such outcomes? Our magick has shown the others who now realize: Yeah, you are the one to gain such outcomes. All because

we ourselves are in contact with our egos. Be in rituals of destruction, blessings, curses or creations, you are the outcome. What is your success?



In Satanism, life is the greatest indulgence, death is the greatest abstinence. However, we all must die. Satan is the deity of this life. He is the spirit of all things desired. I desire to live...



forever. In Vampirism, life is never-ending without interruption. While many of you may scoff at the existence of vampires, understand spiritual vampires are as ancient as the race of man itself! Movies and novels have done a great deal to blur this reality. However, 'blood-sucking spirits' are age old and the deities of antiquity reflect that.

Lilith' of ancient Sumeria (4000 BC) was a night-bird goddess who fed off the blood of

young children. And there is the goddess 'Kali' of ancient Hindu (2000 BC). The list goes on, as well as those who worship them, who practice the sanguine arts of commit what is seen as horrific and insane.

This continues to this day with contemporary vampires. We are beings who have a spiritual DNA, not identical to our human siblings. We are those who sever ourselves from the umbilical cord of the universal whole and must feed from our human counterparts to sustain our immortal existence.

We have died a thousand deaths (well, actually only two for me ☺) and will die many more, born just as many more to come.

I do not invoke Bathory for her convictions of murderous acts. I become her for secrets which could not be known to others (that may have led to her to such 'fearful' attributions). No other than those who need the essence could ever understand.



I do not believe in harm upon any who do not truly deserve, or 'ask for it,' nor harm to animals and children. My acts of Vampirism may be despised, but for different reasons for different peoples lack of knowledge or beliefs.

Vampirism has been the 'hate' of spirituality for thousand years.

Relatively in the 1800s in spiritual circles who taught against 'psychic-vampires,' as did 'Anton LeVay' for modern day Satanism (Church of Satan, Satanic Bible).

Spiritual circles were primarily white-light structured practitioners that paved much of modern Wicca today. It's no wonder many who see any attack of the psych disdainful. And there for protective from allowing such creatures around them. They know nothing of the nature of these they abhor, and even "banish" them – another word for "destroy." They know not the benefits of them either, neither for themselves. However, this is not an attack

upon Wicca, for I've known some who do know a great deal. But I will say no more of this.

CaVey, modern Satanism (which I have a great deal of agreement with and foundation) taught similar beliefs against vampyres of the psychic nature. However, those of which Anton wrote about are not truly Vampyres. He spoke of people who feed off of the people they could make feel guilty or obligated to them. These people are those who are needy and hungry for the attention of others who will sustain their acknowledge of sympathy. This is a mental weakness that a lack of ego will often create. But yet these people, while may be quite draining on their chosen 'victim,' do not take in any actual or vital essence. I believe in what Anton CaVey taught, but not the term or use of the word "vampire" that was applied to those of which he spoke. This has led to a great misunderstanding of many modern Satanists to divide from the vampyre.

The vampyre is one who (in this view of the vampyre) holds the same vital desire and lust for the

indulgence in the flesh. Only the vampyre, while natural instinct is slightly offset, seeks to embrace life for eternity. And to do this, the ego, will, and self is again essential!

I won't get into arguments over right or wrong, morals of the vampyre who feeds off the human herd...or I mean, human existence (my bad!) But we simply feed to sustain our immortality of the conscience self beyond the passing of the fleshly self. We feed in psych, sanguine, and astral-spirit. All three are essential to obtain immortality; just as is an incorrupt grave, and the astral (or spiritual) self, and the psychic (the connector of flesh and spirit is psych, or intellect).

When a vampyre lacks this ego or self and willpower, many will die without memory of a past life and born (or reincarnate) again and again. Many may not even know of their latent vampyric nature, whether they feed knowing or not until awakened to their nature. And then, feed with intention (usually where the term "inherently evil" comes from as nothing without an "intentional"

force can be evil.). And seek to fulfill immortality of the conscious self without fail of memory past the fleshly death. Once obtained to the fullest understanding, the vampyre will no longer need to enter the universal whole, nor the cycle to re-live again and again.

The vampyre can then, by the force of the self, will and ego; and by desire, direction; intentionally feed upon the essence of our sibling species. (This which we feed in: psych, blood, and spirit is the actual 'life-force' or 'energy' of life itself) and therefore see death as not the fearful end, or abstinence, but the eternal gateway of immortality, too. Allow an incorrupted body lay in the grave, with the ego, will, and self of the psych, raise the astral spirit up out into the night and manifest into physical matter and feed yet again and again forever. And feed off those who our provider, our god, Satan gives existence to, and gives us unto ourselves! This is the way (in very short, compressed explanation) of the Satanic Vampyre, and the essential 'ego.'

Until 'necks' time.

Natasha T Chort

Epilogue

Some that the Vampyre feeds in necessity to make up for their mental, physical and spiritual weaknesses says it. However, one must ponder the opposite end of the spectrum to come to any conclusion to entertain the idea of weakness, or strength.

The fish who eats algae, and ponders the idea that shark who must devour its own sibling species to survive, must be weak. Yet the shark, who, during the blood thriving ear, to survive, thinks itself a master evolutionary species, superior to it's water world. Of course, this is a metaphor on the idea of "fish thoughts."

To conclude the understanding and the 'immortality' of the Vampyre; while the mortal shell is worn, the identity of the Vampyre self is regarded as the 'living Vampyre.' During this life its focus on the self and the ego for the eventual success for 'eternal nocturnum' is to create an innate and instinctive nature. Or, moreover, to awaken and sharpen the innate, and instinctive nature and connecting it with-in the self,

by ego and focused will for a specific out-come...immortality.

The necessity of three (3) factors are acknowledged; the three (3) primary sources of 'life-force' or 'energy.'

physical = blood, that being the sanguine nature of the Vampyre. This is controversial since the advent of the AIDS epidemic...discretion with care!!!

psych = the consumption met by intellect and mental capabilities upon the psych of the 'victim.' While there are 'filtering' techniques, I don't recommend feeding from those on heavy psych meds.

astral-spiritual = the astral or spiritual self upon the vital spirit of another, much like Sang feeding only in pure spirit.

All three (3) are essential (by way of the teachings not found in anti-sang psych feeders, or anti-psych sang feeders. This is an esoteric of its own that not many of us speak outwardly of).

The physical can be seen as the grounding factor or, the absolute negative. The psych is seen as the natural, or vital self (house of the ego) and is a connector of the

negative and the positive and can only function by the fact it houses and 'trans'-fers the positive and negative. The astral/spiritual self, or being of the self, is therefore seen as the absolute positive.

It is understanding this, that the 'immortality' rest upon the living Vampyre to utilize the will, ego and self to maximize the potential and direct the outcome to its 'innate, instinctive nature.' The psych is the absolute self and the housing of conscience existence, and it relies on the negative/positive connection. Therefore, the idea of an incorrupt grave must be noticed. The forbidding of cremation is recognized as a fault to keeping the absolute negative in active grounding.

Always seeing the body as the negative and incorrupt (many of us seek processes of mummification), it can then receive the blood, even in postmortem.

Some do practice the art of astral/spiritual projection or travel (and not only Vampyres), but when applied to the postmortem, and devoid of physical connection, the severing

of the umbilical cord to the 'cosmic whole,' immortality and innate, instinctive nature is essential. And is done so by the living Vampyres, will, ego and self. Otherwise, the self will fade, the astral/spirit will die the second death, the body will rot and the immortality is lost.

Once the living Vampyre has honed the nature of the self (understand, you who do not possess the metaphysical DNA of the Vampyre, while you may learn or develop a Vampyre quality, on cannot become a Vampyre; either you are or are not) and the passing through the gates of death

are processioned, the intellect of the psych, will rise the astral, spirit to manifest upon the material plane and feed...and must forever feed. It's like us girls on hormones. Once we start we must always take them. It not, we lose all we are to have with them.

When we don't have them, don't we just die? I just had a scary thought. What happens to us trans-girl Vampyres when pills and humans run out!!! Aaaugh, I'm doomed!

Until 'necks' time,

Natasha



Illustration by Fortune Dean A (aka Satamia)

TransInjustice website now online

Steph (& Watson)

Early release, really?

Good news! Valjean is scheduled to see the parole board in March (and may have already been seen by them by the time you read this). She wasn't suppose to see them until 2009, so their interest in seeing Val caught her by surprise.

Perhaps this is why she was moved from the high security facility she had been in for years to

a lower security institution. After years of living in high security facilities, the adjustment hasn't been easy for Val. But after all she has been through, after three decades of incredible injustice, she is confident she shall 'rize up' to the challenge.

Now the prospect of being eligible for one of Indiana's transition programs puts this into perspective. On February 1st, Val



wrote to that she would be “reviewed by the parole board for placement into the re-entry program that is in an even lower security level facility.”

Subsequently, she explained she could either be placed in this re-entry program or actually be placed on parole.

Wow! Closer to the door and perhaps all the more closer (in more ways than one) in helping all of us develop TransAction – a re-entry program geared towards our unique needs. Albeit, we’re not there yet. First, there’s this TransInjustice project to launch.

Getting the word out

Of course, it helps when you know there are others out there going to bat for you. We had set up a GeoCities website for her, to air her story. But this free service proved insufficient for posting the many documents and materials she keeps sending to us. A paid service would do much more to help her get the word out about her long, long-suffering plight.

After Val arranged for the funding, I set out shopping online for a web hosting service more in tune to our needs. It had to include enough memory for all the PDFs

that were created from scanning the documents she sent. The GeoCities site would never be able to hold them all.

After comparison shopping with several reputable services, it came down to choosing between Yahoo’s and Google’s web hosting plans, each averaging around ten dollars a month. To weigh our options, we received a timely tip from Tsunami. She had just sent us a newspaper clipping: “How to get Google to notice you”. Amazing timing, Tsunami!

Google is the more popular search engine, but Yahoo has been



around longer in the web hosting business. And because GeoCities is through Yahoo, I was already familiar with their online support and tools. Hmm, which shall it be? Watson decided we should go with the Yahoo service.

Watson? Watson who?

Because my life was so rudely interrupted for a dozen years, my knowledge of how to build a website is quite limited. My new roommate said he had some training on how to build one. Great! It's not like I have a whole lotta time to learn. Since he was the one who would be building it then really the choice was his.

It was my goal to have it up by February 1st, and Watson beat that by two days. On Tuesday evening of January 30th, we purchased the first month's service and Watson went to work learning about the many features he would be using to construct the website for Val.

Watson has proved himself quite an ally to the plight of trans-prisoners. We share a 2-bedroom student apartment on campus, helping one another cut our costs. After getting to know one another a little better, this sharing extended to the needs of trans-prisoners. It really started after sharing with him Natasha's plight, about how she may need to stay here for a little while next fall. Wondrous support has blossomed since.

Watson friend is something of a letter-writing activist. He suggested I contact this pen

warrior to see how she might be able to help us. She responded:

Hey - I would love to help! So far, I don't know of exactly where we would write letters to (or even how effective letter-writing is to begin with, but it's probably better than nothing!) I just started working with a Christian prison ministry program, but other than that I know little about prisons. I am very interested in them though because I think prisoners are among the most forgotten people. Anyway I'll look into it, and let you know if I find any useful ways to help. Let me know if you do, too. Thanks for e-mailing me!

Ashley

Her help was also in regard to TransAction, but a special kind of network is emerging from all of this. A "Jen Durr Network", if you will.



Back to the website

By the time Watson launched the website, we knew Val had been moved. But we weren't aware of just how pressing her need suddenly became, to have this site up and running. Once Val received word she would again be seeing the board, she wanted the information available online with alacrity! Yesterday already! With that information available online, Val could more quickly solicit the support she needed to overcome the barriers that hindered her the last time she saw the board.

Instead of yesterday already, we actually had it started two days before her "02/01/07" letter. But actually getting the bulk of her content online was still a work in progress by the time we received her letter, on February 7th. So Saturday, February 10th, Watson and I worked around the clock, through the afternoon of the 11th, to post the remaining content of what I received from Val. (Yeah, sleep is precious, but not as precious as Val's need for justice and liberty.)

The following Saturday we were able to carve out some time to fix some loose spots – broken links, misspellings, awkward page breaks, etc. This has become Watson's "baby" and he plans to see it develop into a fully featured website that not only showcases Val's plight but also the many other tragic stories of enduring injustice largely because of one's transgender status.

Now, and then

For now, the only "transinjustice" story the site showcases is Valjean's. From the homepage, the viewer can see learn more about Val's three-decades long survival story by clicking on the About Us button. Then click on the picture of Valjean, or her name, to go to the subdomain specifically for her.

This takes the viewer to her homepage on the site. This homepage features another image of Val and some brief text to introduce the viewer to her life story. Above her image is a row of menu buttons: TransInjustice, Valjean Royal, Summary, Full Story, and Supporting Documents.

The first button on the left (TransInjustice) takes the viewer back to the website's homepage. The next button is for returning to this homepage, after moving onto the other pages. The third button (Summary) takes the viewer to a 356-word synopsis of Val's account of the injustice she suffered back in the 70s and how it still reverberates today.

Then the Full Story button takes the viewer to Val's own "Trans-Children of the Corn" article, sharing the many injustices she has had to endure over the years. The final button brings up a list of a supporting documents that supporters can refer to when critiquing her account of events. (Each of these documents, except two, are PDF files and hence



take up much more memory than allowed at the GeoCities service.)

As we tweak her part of the website, we hope to expand the whole site to welcome other cases of transgender-related injustice. We could have dedicated the whole site to Valjean, as other websites have done. But we thought if we opened up the site for others to post their plights, then her story would receive much more exposure and circulation.

Likewise, their stories would be more readily read by others in similar circumstances. And who best to provide the initial consoling support than those who have also suffered injustice in some way because of their transgender status?

Some ideas

One idea is to open the site as a free blog, where anyone can set up a blog that shares their particular story of transgender-related injustice endured. Others are encouraged to leave comments, so that a kind of dialogue can emerge. However, Val's

story would always be featured as the premier story of remarkable endurance.

Another idea, building on this blog idea, is to provide a limited space to anyone for free (e.g., a 1000 words and 1 uploaded pic) while offering for a slight fee more space (e.g., up to 10,000 words and up to 20 pix). To piggyback on this idea, we could have an

even larger package for a larger set amount (e.g., up to 1MB of text and another 2MB for pix and docs). This could potentially raise the revenue to help the site pay for itself.

This revenue could be used to upgrade the web hosting service, if more memory is needed. The more postings then inevitably the more visitors we would see the site. At the About Us page, or perhaps even at the homepage, we could feature an ad that sells subscriptions to this little wonderful zine I know, Yeah, this one. This could help us pay for this zine.

Any ideas you care to contribute? That's what the Feedback session is for. Looking forward to hearing and sharing your ideas. Just keep in mind this is Val's vision and Watson's baby. As the one paying for the service and providing the impetus for having the site, Val obviously has the final say on any idea shared. As the one who has to do the actual work in setting it up, these ideas must pass muster with Watson as well. But we look forward to your beautiful input.

FRESH IDEAS

To Believe, Or Not To Believe

By **Tsunami Caryl-Averlyn**

I listened to an interesting broadcast on talk-radio regarding the affects the current political climate in a post 9-11 world is having on the growth of atheist groups.

When Richard Golden put the word out that he was starting a group for atheists in Walnut Creek, California, about a dozen people showed up.

Two years later, 80 dues-paying members and several more drop in on twice-monthly meetings to chew on everything from particle physics to court cases.

Horrified by escalating religious violence and alarmed by the Bush Administration's "faith-based initiatives," which make government money available to religious organizations, atheists are coming out of the "closet" – and organizing.

According to Ellen Johnson, president of American Atheists, active groups have grown by about 90 percent over the past six years.

National membership in the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), a group of atheist and agnostics that monitors the separation of church and state, grew from 5,000 in 2004 to 6,400 members by the beginning of 2006, according to co-founder Annie Laurie Gaylor.

Meetings and rallies, once the province of older folk, now include younger people with tattoos and dreadlocks. The

Internet, radio spots, and campus groups are responsible, Johnson said.

But atheism appears to be gaining ground as a "belief" and not just a wave of political activism by those who fear the wall between church and state is being disassembled. Books challenging religion, like *Letters to a Christian Nation*, by Sam Harris, and *The God Delusion*, by Richard Dawkins, have started appearing on best-seller lists.





ffrf FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

protecting the constitutional principle of the separation of state and church

Click to continue to the Freedom From Religion Foundation website

Should this be a faith-based office?

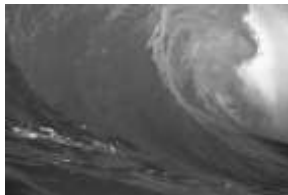
RICHARD DAWKINS
THE GOD DELUSION

Letter to a Christian Nation
SAM HARRIS
THE END OF FAITH

The U.S. government should not be in the religion business.

Two University of California at Berkeley sociology professors found that the proportion of Americans with no religion doubled from 1990 to 1998, but has leveled out at 14 percent.

Studies suggest the surge in interest is more a wavelet than a “*tsunami*.” The Baylor University Institute Religion Survey, released September 11, 2006, showed 10.8 percent of the nation’s population, or some 10 million Americans, do not adhere to some faith. The majority of 1,721 respondents who were unaffiliated with a religion said they believe in some “Higher Power.”



The FFRF has brought 30 First Amendment lawsuits since 1977, and has more percolating through the courts. Among its victories: winning the first federal lawsuit challenging direct government funding of a faith-based agency.

One of the most recent developments to galvanize activists is the “Public Expression of Religion Act” (PERA), sponsored by Val’s homeboy, U.S. Rep. John Hostetler. The bill would deny attorney’s fees and damages to those who successfully argue against violations of the church-state separation. Wow! Now that’s religious dialogue.

To Fly Like a Trans-Eagle

by Steph

When I read Natasha's words in issue 04, about slumbering in her crypt too long, I felt I too had been slumbering too long and neglecting a previous commitment. A year ago I had pledged to share more about "transspirituality" in this zine. Instead, I have allowed myself to become so encumbered by day-to-day business activities that I have overlooked a vital mission for my life. Starting here, I plan to rectify that. Starting in this issue, I once again aim to share more about this concept of my gender transcendent experience being integral to my spirituality.

To re-introduce this, I need to step back to an earlier moniker. Prior to describing this as "transspirituality," I used the adjective "transcultural" to describe this simple phenomenon. Later, I can link this to what I understand as *transspirituality*.

"Transculturality" appears to be a common phenomenon, exhibited in varying degrees in a broad spectrum of humanity. Essentially, the *trans-cultural* or *transconventional* experience is about being *compelled to transcend any rigid cultural norms and stifling social conventions that one intuitively experiences as an infringement upon a greater sense of being.*

Consider how we T* are compelled to transcend the gender binarism. Now imagine being compelled to similarly transcend "religious divisions." And being compelled to transcend "ethnic distinctions." And "political polarities." And even the cultural polarity between "guilt" and "innocence." What if these are also "orientations" that underscores the many misfits in society?

"If you don't stand for anything, you will fall for everything." I appreciate the wisdom in this adage. It speaks to those who lack a grounding that can keep them from being unduly influenced by every passing fad. But isn't there more to life than this adage addresses?

I also realize standing rigidly for anything culturally relative creates unbearable tension within me. Like too much masculinity compels me to express my neglected femininity, too much conservatism compels me to express my liberal side. Or too much liberalism compels me to express my conservative side.

Others somehow endure this tension or suffer no tension at all. Some of these have scorned me as a "fence sitter." For them, perhaps, balancing between these modalities is fence sitting. They cannot "straddle"

between liberalism and conservatism, between Christianity and nonchristianity, between masculinity and femininity.

I don't necessarily "straddle" between opposing options in my transcultural experience. It is more like I fly over the temporal divisions below, like an eagle soaring high above. It is like I am a kind of "trans-eagle" among many four-legged species.

They need to claim their territory, to identify themselves with one category against another. I need to relate to all categories and identify myself with all life. And this need shapes my ethics, to stay above reproach. Because reproach for aligning myself against what I experience as another dimension of my deeper self affects my spiritual integrity.

When a sister questioned my motives I sense she reacted according to what was familiar to her in a conventional sense. To her, I sensed I appeared as a pathetic people-pleaser too afraid to face conflict and stand up to the evils of oppression. Because of this transcultural force within me, I am not conventional. I am "trans-conventional."

For example, I do not relate to the conventional notion that fear is always a bad thing. I do not experience any fear that doesn't serve me; that doesn't inform me that my previous experiences can assure me that I am ready to

handle what is before me. All emotions are to me a gift of Nature for me to reflect upon. They provide me a necessary immediate impression for assessing my needs, but only in those moments when my survival is immediately threatened do my feelings sufficiently inform me how to instantly act.

It is about living in balance, and not being tossed about into polarizing extremes. When avoiding the trenches of these extremes, it is amazing how much energy I can find to stretch beyond accepted limits and cultivate a broader spectrum of my human potential. Conversely, when I defer to conventional norms and negotiate a path of confining modalities, I can start to feel this energy dissipate.

With all that is on my plate now, I simply cannot take for granted this energy supply. I am guided by a "transspiritual ethic" that provides me the liberty to continue to soar on high and escape the limits of cultural modalities. Much as I am compelled to transcend the gender divide and avoid being rigidly categorized into either gender modality, I am also compelled to avoid being rigidly categorized into any limiting modality.

At a mystical level, I experience myself to be connected to all. While profoundly connected to all, in a realm much deeper than temporal or cultural categories, I cannot freely pit myself in one category against another. I don't exist there. In fact, I do not experience

myself as being opposed to anyone. Albeit, others may see themselves as opposed to me, but from my mystical perspective they are merely opposed to the temporal apparition of my physical presence.

Later, I would like to share how this transspirituality energizes me to transcend pain itself. To convey these concepts I will likely have to introduce you to a new vocabulary of terms. Stretching beyond conventional norms has led to a lexicon of fresh perspectives. I look forward to sharing these and reading whatever ideas they may trigger in you.

Mystic Meta-Gender

My spirit has no gender accoutrements; my inner being at its deepest core is genderless. Because of my mystical relationship with this reality, I tend to repel any entrapments of gender. My spirit especially loathes the culturally defined gender divide, with its imposing distinctions. I do not find such limits at the deeper levels of existence.

Gender and gender norms are currently inevitable factors in relating with others on a social level. When I try to maintain social ease by going along with these divisive gender norms (being deferent as an act of grace), my soul after a while rebels. It insists on the inner balance my soul intuitively knows exists, and refuses

to be tied down by the gender binarism.

In fact, my spirit spreads naked as it casts off the many garments of temporal reference points. They detract from my inner beauty, which my spirit cannot allow. The more my outer being struggles to maintain peace at a social level, the more my inner spirit contends for expression of the other half denied expression.

If my masculinity suppresses my feminine expression, then my femininity yearns for expression. If my dominant culture religion congeals into some socially accepted norm, I naturally gravitate towards other spiritual forms of expression. If my conservative tendencies crystallize, energy wells up within me towards a more liberal perspective.

This ethos of empathy overwhelms me. I'm faced with a need to affirm the inner balance that exists beyond all socialized divisions. And then to embrace the purity of balanced existence that comes deep within, at a profoundly deep spiritual level. This compels me to transcend any rigid cultural norm infringing upon my spirit.

Resisting this spiritual force is to invite trouble. It is by flowing with it that I become attuned to the meaning of life. In flowing with it I become centered in my being. I harmonize with all "other" that isn't really other, but another extension of the Ultimate One we all are.

FEEDBACK

Comments and Review from Voljeen

Letters to Editor & Deadline is...pee-u!!!

Tsunami Caryl-Averlyn, girlfriend, you are first in this line! As my current Letter to the Editor indicates, it is not easy being an editor when your plate is already fairly full. I guess this is why I give our editor five stars (★★★★) for an outstanding job, considering all that there is to consider. I think that our editor deserves to be saluted for setting a very positive example for other trans men and women released from United States prisons. So, Ms Tsunami, our very own “Unitarian” – “Universalist,” we have to get our sistuh editor some help so that she can get it right, and keep it tight! Peeee-u, what’s dat? ☺

The photos of Tsunami in our 05 issue are simply gorgeous! I’m no hater, but, well, I was a wee bit jealous, okay? Then again, she is representing me and trans women all over. With that in mind, jealousy fades and proudness is elevated.

No, you didn’t miss a thing, Tsunami. 2000 issue was a misprint. Correction (01 issue 2006). I am thrilled that you are feeling my submissions, Tsunami. I am always able to relate to your freedom writings as well. Your “Religious Right” in issue 05, spotlighting former U.S. Senator Jack Danforth, I agree with you 100%. The divisive role of religion in America’s politics is deserving of all of our unwavering attention. It is clear that some seek to merge Religious Right with Constitutional rights.

TransInjustice, I can assure you, can use your help, support, prayers, and assistance. We are making some very positive progress, support and donations in our efforts towards the manifestation of this vision. Hopefully, this 06 issue gives everyone a much better understanding of the mission here.

Oh, by the way, yes, it’s gross, but it’s true! Ms FeFe, created and penetrated by prison sexual predators to ejaculate into, consists of a shit in a mattress, a plastic bag containing ground beef and warm

lotion or baby oil, placed in a sock. The sock they place in the shit in the mattress. They penetrate it like it's a real person.

One last thing, Tsunami dear, why tease us?! You stated, "Amanda isn't the only one that gets caught up in the moments!" Dish the tee, honey, don't be scared. ☺ Grrrl, I didn't send you a copy of the excerpt of "Trans Children of the Corn" because of the contents and your location. But have no fear, my sistuh dear, I will hook you up in the very near future.

Hugs an' blessings backs back to our Satannia sister, Fortune Dean A. It is very special to have a love one in your life during your journey away from freedom. Your words truly reflect your love and appreciation for Tim. I personally wish you much love in your relationship and tons of success in your future life, after the "Mean Miles." As a Christian, I found your quote by Anton Szander LaVey rather harsh but not offensive. I am not one that will be judgmental or disrespectful. I love listening and learning about other cultures and religious beliefs. I do agree, however, "Life is worth living to the fullest, and that's also what I want!"

Natasha T'Chort, your 05 submission touched my heart and sent my hopes for change directly into action! You won't be alone, Natasha. You'll see. You do have family! You have us, and we are blessed to have you. So you just start getting ready to come home because we have a lot of work to do and Steph needs your help. TransAction will be built from our own needs and experiences. Who could possibly be better equipped to construct such a humanitarian mission action than some sistahs that have been there and knows fully the importance and the need due to its absence in their own lives???

We, your *Trans Spirituality* family, will come in many cultures, backgrounds, and religions "compromised into a single force." Get ready, Natasha, because "A change is gonna come!"

Bella Donna Night Raven, I was happy you were able to share your submissions. You and I go back to our days as freedom writers in the *TIP Journal*. I look forward to more of your work. Good luck with your Supreme Court procedures, sincerely.



Chicago Excursion

Thank you, Steph, for taking us with you to Chicago. It was easy to mentally travel with you and experience what your trip was all about through your description of your journey and presentation.

First time flying, huh? Sounds exciting! The pizzas sounded very good. ☺ And the Chicago rainstorm was truly cleansing and refreshing when imagined after so many years of captivity. The slide show presentation, I could go on all day about it. All I can say at this time is a heart felt thank you!

Thank you for taking us with you and giving life to our situations and voices. Amanda, Steph, my heroes, 'take your bows,' ladies, for representing in a superb fashion, Ok-k-k!!!

The *Cruel and Unusual* documentary gave me much hope for a chance to expose the injustice that myself and many other trans women have suffered. Unfortunately, the Indiana DOC had other plans, so my participation came to a screaming halt. My spirits were broken, my hopes evaporated. However, with prayer for continuous guidance and strength, with the spirit of our Trans Spirituality embracing me, I was able to pull through and seek other avenues to

expose how hatred towards my transgender lifestyle led to an injustice that most people could not even imagine, let alone survive. I hope that the *Cruel and Unusual* film will aid in our struggle to educate society of the injustice many of us suffer and many more will continue to suffer until our communities simply say "No more!"

I am prayerful that our Trans-Injustice efforts will gain that unity. I have a dream that one day I will walk out of here and thousands of people from our alternative lifestyle communities will be waiting outside the prison walls. They will be waiting to witness, to scream and cheer, as I take my first steps out of the grips of hatred and the injustice they find no longer acceptable. They are there because they are the ones responsible for this day of victory. The day justice prevails, after the naked truth was exposed.

If we have TransInjustice, we have a platform to expose our truths of injustice.

In closing: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has...." (Margaret Mead)

I am,
Valjean Royal

Feedback to Val's "Matters of the Heart" from Tsunami

Dearest Readers & Friends,
...and especially my dearest Val.... I want to address something Val said in Issue 04, pg. 26, under "Matters of the Heart." She says, quote: "As a trans-woman (if you are) it is only natural to be attracted to a man," unquote.

I disagree with that statement for a *lot* of reasons. First, it equates one's gender preference with their sexual pref. Why couldn't a trans-woman be a lesbian? Or some actually call themselves hetero-trans-women (or men). Indeed I know of pre-op T/S whom prefer nidals (biological women) in relationships/sex, *and* post-ops (SRS) the same. I also have two very close friends that are post-op trans-men. Both consider themselves "gay" and have sex/relationships exclusively with men.

There was a time when all bi's, queers and T* were clumped together into gay or lesbian categories. Obviously we've grown in our knowledge and perception of things and the so-called professionals have actually caught up with "reality" in classifying our

gender preference as wholly different from our sexual pref.

To accept Val's position would be the *same* as saying a biological male (if he is) is only naturally attracted to women, or should be. And, of course, millions of gays would beg to differ.

I'm a trans-woman, that is my gender pref. As for sex/relationship wise, I'm queer. It depends on the individual and what they have to offer, how well we click, and what I'm feeling at that given time. ☺ I don't have *no problem* pitching, if somebody wants to catch...but my gender is constant.

So, in short, there's nothing "natural" about any of this. I've met and encountered *every* combination of gender-preference/sexual-preference you can imagine. And certainly there's no boundary (or rule) that trans-women should be naturally attracted to men. (Note: our editor & publisher-distributor are T* and they're not attracted to men). Live true...like I know you do.



Feedback to "TransAction"

Starting from Valjean

The Program

The TransAction program proposal views its foundation as being in accordance with the needs of each applicant as an individual, with unique and special needs to provide them a chance at a smooth, successful transition from prison back into a free society.

Because gender is so visible, transgender offenders that apply for residential transition assistance must "out" themselves to their employers, families, parole/probation officers, and literally everyone in their lives involved in their transitional process. When it comes to transgender offenders and x-offenders, the current transition assistance that is available leaves the transgender applicant very vulnerable to discrimination while they remain in dire need of support/assistance from a group of their peers that understands their needs and life experiences.

The vision to develop such a program is long overdue, and is in need of support in many ways towards manifestation into a

reality service for trans people. This is an humanitarian effort deserving the attention of lawmakers and legislators whom claim to have sincere concern in reducing the overall recidivism votes. I pledge to remain a part of determined forces working towards the reality and total success of this sort of "First Aid Kit" for trans prisoners before and after being released.

(Current) Transitional Assistance Programs for Prisoners

Personal experience:

I have experienced first hand discrimination openly as a trans-woman, when I applied for residential transition re-entry assistance. I've experienced rejection from several faith based organizations that operates from federal funding to complement President Bush's faith-based "Second Chance Bill."

One example of discrimination that was shamelessly apparent is my 2001 application and denial into the Dismis House, a residential transitional house founded by the

United Religious Community. This example was one of “many” rejections of encountered in my attempts to locate and secure placement into a transitional program. One willing to provide re-entry residential assistance to a pre-op transgender woman in a pursuit of happiness by living in the appropriate gender, rather than the appointed one. An environment that provides the standards of living essential towards providing a smooth transition for trans x-prisoners moving back into society.

I personally feel that the process of transition should begin at the start of an individual’s sentence rather than the end. This is also a concept I express in a 1999 letter to the Indianapolis Star newspaper. This was in response to two articles: “Better to Transition Inmates Into Society” and the Letter Spotlight by Indianapolis

prosecutor Scott C. Newman. Mr. Newman filed a lawsuit stating that this state’s present Transition Act isn’t a program at all, but rather a budget negotiation to somehow cut prison spending. I

fully agreed with the prosecutor. I find that the transition must begin at the entry stage of the prison experience simply because that is when rehabilitation must be made available to “all” convicted felons. Rehabilitation and transition goes hand in hand.

**I personally feel
that the process of
transition should
begin at the start
of an individual’s
sentence rather
than the end.**

TransAction (Branch Proposal)

Program: Transition = “Inside <> Out”

Recently, I spoke with a young pre-op transgender (MTF) prisoner that is being released from prison on November 22, 2006. She stressfully voiced her concern to me. Instead of being happy and elated as her golden day of freedom grew closer, she grew more

stressed, depressed and fearful of the failure that being transgender has always been in a non-acceptant environment. So far, she has never known a support system where her most extreme emotional and mental transitional needs in gender has not been flat out rejected and/or ignored!

One of her main concerns was the state-issued “dress out” that is issued by the state to indigent prisoners. Since this prison administration does not train staff to accommodate transgender prisoners, one way or the other, the transgender will be issued all male clothing. As you can imagine, it is not beneath some staff that are living with transphobia spirits to intentionally attempt to humiliate the transgender being released by simply issuing the most mannish dress out they can find. Unisex clothing, or simply clothing worn comfortably by both sexes, would accommodate a transgender prisoner being released appropriately. However, this is not a consideration for indigent transgender “dress-out” issues.

If a transgender prisoner does not have family, friends, or support groups sympathetic to the transgender needs and willing to donate a dress out package, the

transgender prisoner is left at the mercy of the state. When left up to the state, the right to choose dress out items is only in the mind of the transgender prisoner.

As an elder pre-op transgender woman at this facility, to assist this young trans sister, I advocated for her needs by networking via postal service. I had hopes of connecting her with sources in society that may have been able to offer their services with clothing for dress out for prisoner’s with needs for unisex clothing...

The process began too late and this trans sister was released before any results were made possible. It is clear to me if we confront these issues, we can combat them. I found from this effort to help a sister that help is out there and we can build a network of resources of support towards our right to life by simply living.

Live true,

Valjean Royal

Update:

Two weeks after this trans sister was released she appeared on the evening local news after being arrested in Indianapolis, Indiana, for purse snatching...

TransAction - Financing the Program

from Natasha

There is something that may very well be a huge help for our 'TransAction' program. The whole 'gender dysphoria' thing being a 'psychological' issue and deemed a federally recognized medical condition is just what 'TransAction' needs.

See, when Bill Clinton was Prez, he made the same out of drugs and alcohol abuse. Treatment for D&A abuse, *as well as transgender conditions*, is eligible for S.S.I. (Social Security Income). S.S.I. recipients will not *only* receive a monthly government check for mental disability, but also will receive medical treatment.

I did this for drugs and alcohol back in '92, but I didn't fulfill the programs to continue monthly checks. So I was cut off. But 'gender dysphoria' is classified as a mental disability. So, to make a full circle here, what I think needs to be looked into is the medical department, *and* how government doctors will work with TransAction.

When I applied for S.S.I. for my 'mental disability' (D&A abuse) I went to the S.S.I. building to file an application for my condition. Now I would do this for 'gender dysphoria.' But I told them in my state of imbalance back then, "I'm on the streets and can't get work, a job, etc." Told 'em this because it was understood we needed to sound completely helpless.

The S.S.I. issues a check for *you* (or TransAction, for the program) to provide a place to store food, bath and shelter. Through a sponsored program, the individual can then *help themselves*. But the program, or you, is to be the participant's 'sponsor.' This means the checks are to be sent from the government to *you*, or to the program's name for the name of the check's patient.

They won't allow any S.S.I. recipient of *mental disorder* cash their own check. It is, after all, mental disability S.S.I. The money is to be handled by the program for its participants. From this fund the program provides the recipients with food, clothes, shelter and – the programming of TransAction.

Anyway, got off track. When I did it, I had no program to fill for it,

so to just reiterate what I went through, my cousin in-law was my sponsor on the S.S.I. application.

About a month later I was to go to the government doctor for evaluation for my condition. This is where it will be good for us, because once you see a doctor from the federal government programming, it's pure gold. And for those of us who don't have that certification of transgender diagnosis, well, now they will.

I was told to show up sober! Well, I thought, not only am I incapable at that point in my life, but also, lucky me, I'm suppose to be incapable. At least that is how I saw it at the time. Just to prove I really was a mentally disabled D&A case, I went to a 7-11, bought 2 forty ounces of Coors Light and slammed them on the way to see the doctor. By the time I sat in front of him, the Coors Light was slamming me right back.

I took a series of tests that I could have passed if I was even more drunk. But being needy of that monthly check, the more the

test got harder (elementary as they were) the more fun I had to fail them. Once I left, about 4 months later, I got a \$2,000 check for S.S.I. disability. And in '92, I got \$364.00 every month after that until it was taken for failure to program.

I want to know that someone does know me, and in spite of it all, knows I can be trusted, respected and maybe someone can even love me for me.

Okay, now I want you to understand something, love. I was a different person back then. And my priorities have changed as well as myself as a person. I would

not do that anymore, fake it, abuse it, just for a check. I was younger, strung out and lazy. But you will see I am no longer someone who could do that now, and just take without giving.

I told you this to show you what I know that could help TransAction, and how I know it. I think I've shown you how open and real I am, about who I am, who I was and how I've changed. I want to know that someone does know me, and in spite of it all, knows I can be trusted, respected and maybe someone can even love me for me.

Some Practical Considerations for a Trans Inmate Residential Program

from Santannia

Dearest Steph

Well, what a fine job you've done on this Winter Solstice issue #5. It's truly amazing that Natasha T'Chort, yourself, Valjean Royal, along with Tim Crane and me (Satannia) have all the same subject matter to discuss.

TRANSaction: a residential program for trans inmates.

By the time I finished each article I became extremely emotional. I want to know how we could go about finding such a project. And how much information you have in this area dealing with government grants for small businesses. I would like to see if we can somehow get this off the ground.

Yes, I understand there's a lot to discuss and plenty of barriers in our way. So where can we start? If one person cannot get backing to start a residential program for trans

inmates, then can two or three? And what are the prerequisites?

I wanted to know if you can give me more information about this. I realize the problem with snail-mail, so I'm giving you my boyfriend's email. I think there's some way we can get something going. Yes, there's a lot of legality involved, but I've been thinking along the same lines for a while. Big question is: How?

I want to see what can be done between now and when Natasha is released. Now is a good time to start looking for alternatives. Tell me what we need to do and I'll see if I can find information that would benefit all of us.

When you started the Trans Spirituality zine, did you already deal with getting a small business loan? If I remember correctly, you had mentioned about dealing with the governmental issues in a prior issue. I have some pointers that I wanted to mention, some you may have already taken into consideration.

1. What is the prerequisite for establishing an account to receive non-profitable donations from outside sources? Must an attorney set it up?
 2. What about getting donations to construct a house, such as a four-bedroom place? And then there's the question of where it will be located, in a major metropolitan area or rural (i.e., 10 miles out of town). I see a couple of pros and cons there. Too close to an urban environment may include problems with drugs and prostitution, and the idea is to *avoid* recidivism. That surrounding environment may prove fatal. If located out of town, the T-sisters could relax and use the concept of slow reintegration back into society more fully.
 3. Rural land no less than 20 acres is approximately \$2500 to \$3500 per acre for timberland, and \$3000 to \$4000 per acre for crop or tillable land.
 4. Construction, funding to acquire land and building (grants, fed/state funds, etc).
 5. Medical services availability, such as staff on hand or a visiting physician, nurses, therapist, psychologist, or even psychiatrist. Will they work on a sliding scale?
 6. Educational services availability, perhaps working with local schools or colleges, or other programs.
 7. Social skills with other T's and ability to integrate slowly back into the community with basic social skills.
 8. Medical backgrounds on all T's to see if health conditions can be approached realistically within our establishment.
 9. As rough as this may sound, there realistically may be some T's whom this establishment cannot help. Not due to any criminal history, but due to limited resources to serve such needs as severe medical and psychological issues, possibly disrupting the program's long term goals. Rules and regulations, and expected financial payments for staying there, would ultimately have to be addressed, would they not?
- I have shared some ideas and concerns that several of us here have discussed. In no shape or form am I trying to not include different T's for any reason, but I want your thoughts on this touchy area. How do you see it possible? I welcome all thoughts and concerns. I am extremely interested in seeing this project succeed.
-

Some Insights into Seeking Grants

from Sue Poe

TransAction sounds very cool. I've been mulling over your letter for days and hardly know where to start with imparting any wisdom. First, in your mission proposal under Program Vision, in the last paragraph, you discuss self-protective behavior due to harassment. "TG inmates were targeted and harassed by authorities" might should be candied up since it might cause those authorities you'll have to work with and get support from to be defensive.

Maybe broaden the point that this behavior develops from discrimination from transfolx' families and other social institutions like school, jobs, landlords, doctors, then tuck in the justice system and corrections. Or something. I'm thinking of gov't funding here. They're happier hearing how easy it will be for them to help you solve their problems than having their shortcomings pointed out. Having said this I wouldn't want to try to water down your point.

TransAction sounds like a project that should have a Board of Directors, staff and Advisory Committee or Board. You should know these people pretty well and how they work, and stay on target and can set aside self-interest. The best ideas and solid plans are dependent on peoples' motives and capabilities. ...

Where to begin – most grant funders are slower to give on spec. They fund well-running projects that accomplish goals, and want to see varied organized fundraising in effect; events, major donors, appeal letters, maybe memberships, retail projects (like many HIV programs here run second-hand shops, which give some clients job experience and can help them pay back to the organization). Grant funders are interested in other grants you've received and usually will only want to cover a fraction of your budget. Basically they like to feel like a partner in what they fund, and can feel good about what their money helps accomplish.

Let me know if you already know all of this. There are great grant-writing tips and resources by just googling 'grant writing'. And of course, google 'grants' for massive amounts of resources to tap. Some funders have simple grant application forms, others prefer a lot of creative writing. If you, or whoever, puts together grant proposals, I can candy them up for bigger appeal. Editing or rewriting, I mean.

There is little in the way of trans program funding. The easier money is in HIV or Domestic Violence/ Sexual Assault programs from government funding, if you can work those services significantly into your purpose & activities. State & county health departments always have surprises. Check for minority & women's grants. Usually legislators get discretionary funds to dole out – Rachel Crandell probably knows who the trans-friendly legislators are in Michigan. Ask other agencies and GLBT groups what funding they know is available. Affirmations & the Triangle Foundation should be helpful.



Statistically, the trans community gives less [economic support] than any other demographic, and it's small. Always reach out to and involve normals, not just the trans. These are rotten times for many mainstream charities & nonprofits, and several national trans mags & organizations have gone under in the past 2 years. Network & start working relationships with as many other agencies and GLBT

services as you can. Doing TransAction in partnership with Affirmations might be an excellent thing. The Metropolitan Community Church in Detroit might be helpful. Shmooze & shmooze &

shmooze. You will need to find those who can help you shmooze.

The IFGE has very little money and could only give a drop in the bucket for something the scope of TransAction. ... Anyway, guidelines for submitting a proposal to the IFGE's Winslow Street Fund are usually in Transgender Tapestry. ... Grant funders are usually very helpful with the process. They'll explain questions you might have.

Some Ideas for TransAction

by Steph

The feedback I am receiving for the TransAction vision has been wonderful. Thanks for all of our input. It has added to the synergy of ideas that come to me on almost a daily basis. Too many ideas to cover here. But I do want to share a few.

Faith-based?

Since we are about encouraging the spiritual dimension of the transgender experience, my vision includes the notion that one's spirituality is central to their life experience, and integral in their transition back into society. In contrast to many faith-based re-entry programs, we want to affirm the established spiritual expression each participant already has and not impose any new ones. And respect those who have no religious labels.

Are you irreligious? Me too, actually. Can't seem to conform to any religious norms. My "spirituality" is inherently irreligious – something of an oxymoron. If your established belief system is to avoid having any established religious

belief system, well, you will definitely be welcome here!

Agnostic? Atheist? I respect these as legitimate belief sets for shaping one's understanding of the world. Whose definition of spirituality are we using? Negotiable. But as a starting point you may be introduced to an earth-centric conception of spirituality, of being balanced with nature – your own gender gifted nature included. But this view of spirituality attempts to remain balanced with one's original religious expressions or lack thereof. Makes sense?

As we transcend gender barriers, can we not transcend religious barriers? I envision a cultivated atmosphere where we not merely tolerate other religious expression but embrace our religious diversity. I am already about learning from one another's spiritual paths, as a way to deepen my own. And learning from one another's gender identity experience is central to this.

I want to utilize this program to explore the concept of the

transgender experience as a spirituality unto itself. Each participant may be introduced to “transspirituality” as a spiritual experience that helps to explain our compulsion to transgress sacrosanct cultural norms. Especially those societal norms that impede our intuitive drive towards greater self-actualization. And how the frustration of this “impulse” by socialization pressures may be the culprit to many of our issues of imbalance.

This exploration includes an increased awareness of how those more dependent upon these cultural norms experience our nonconformity to them. Transspirituality encourages even a transcendence of the “us-them” binary. As we find the energy to “soar over” our apparent differences, we can then offer this perspective in compassion to those our gender transgressions seemingly affect.

We can invite these gender-normed to meet their felt needs in a way that doesn't limit our own, thus building a broader sense of community. Those who decline the invitation do so at their own hurt, for we cannot change who we blissfully are on account of their developmental lack. We cannot

offer them the breadth of our expanded humanity if they remain stuck inside their insecure shells.

There is a liberty to be found by transcending their concerns. It is when I feel stuck in their way of looking at the world that I succumb to the stress between meeting my basic needs (like interpersonal security) or addressing my self-actualization needs (like crossgender expression). I cannot be responsible to their acculturated means for addressing social needs (like relying on gender norms for defining sexual boundaries) if I am not allowed to be “response-able” from the authenticity of my personhood. TransAction is to be a sanctuary where this sacred principle shall be guarded.

It is a lack of such a sanctuary, of sacred space to cultivate one's unique potential, that I suspect led many to cave in to the pressures to conform to debilitating norms. With few supports, we suffered much frustration and perhaps a path that led us to the iron house. “Recovery” here is about enjoying the needed support to live true to the beauty of your inner self.

Yes, we are “faith-based” in that we are about cultivating each soul's faith in oneself. Then invest that

faith in one another, towards a greater sense of community. A community where each soul's personal sacred path is encouraged to add to the transgender synergy of us all. None like you perhaps have ever seen before! (Okay, my vision is grand.)

Self-sufficiency

To attract grant support, it will be incumbent upon us to find ways to raise our own revenue. Natasha's piece touches on how each participant could bring in government aid, and that's a good start. To build on that, I was thinking something more entrepreneurial.

Sue's piece spoke of HIV programs running second-hand shops, and perhaps we could do the same or something like it. After all, we will likely be sorting through a good deal of donated clothing for participants to transition back into their identified gender.

Perhaps we can make our own clothing. Does anyone know how to sew? Could you instruct others on various sewing techniques? On how to fully utilize the features of a sewing machine?

This idea hit me the other day. (I still got a lump on my head where the idea



hit. ☺) I was browsing eBay for various fem attire, including a variety of fetish wear (virtual window shopping is one of my favorite things to do while on a



study break). I've noticed that the real cool T* stuff is made offshore and sold in places like China, Hong Kong, Australia and the UK. This usually means an exorbitant shipping rate and a long wait before receiving the package.

Occasionally I come across some sellers of this T* fashion closer to home. They either resell these items or make the clothing themselves. While the offshore sellers seldom sell every item (and often have large inventories), the North American seller typically sells all these types of clothing they post on eBay. They also have more competing bidders for their items, driving up the opening price.

With our collective wisdom, certainly we can tap into the tastes of fem wear for others like us. And with some careful observations of what sells and when best to sell on eBay, we may be able to carve out for ourselves a niche market.

On eBay, I searched sewing machines, fabric, sewing kits (spools of thread, needles, etc), dress form mannequins, and dress patterns. Not only does this save me a trip (since I still don't have a car), these items are often available at much reduced prices – for the clever, skillful bidder. We want to tap into our collective skills, and perchance learn some new ones.

An idea I have is for participants who enter the TransAction program with few or any employment prospects to be offered a set of money raising projects, including this sewing venture. It would not be employment, as such, since we do not have the means to fulfill all the legal obligations to be a bona fide employer. Maybe

someday.

Rather, each participant would sign an agreement to help create original garments for sale for the benefit of the TransAction program. After costs for material and machinery, half the net sale revenue would go to help support the program while the other half goes to those who made the item. Perhaps the percentages will be contingent on other factors.

Some items may be made by one individual. Other items may involve teamwork, sharing the revenue of their collective effort. For example, one may cut out the fabric using a pattern, another sewing the basic seams of the item,

another sewing in the zippers or buttons, another sewing on any pockets or such detail work, with another taking care of miscellaneous matters like packaging and quality assurance.

For one's initial learning experience, the first item sewn would not be for sale but hers to keep. So she may pick out a pattern of her liking, fabric of her choosing, and other aspects as long as it stays within our budget. In exchange, she would be pledging to then help make



items for sale to help support the program. The time she has to learn on one of the available sewing machines may be limited, so she may be encouraged to work as efficiently as possible.

Can you see yourself working on making a Goth skirt? PVC dress? How about sewing together a leather dominatrix dress? A silver lame skirt shouldn't take too much effort. A lame leotard? What if we could make our own unitards and sold them at competitive prices? What if we could make our own thigh high boots from a kit? What tickles your fancy?

Other ideas

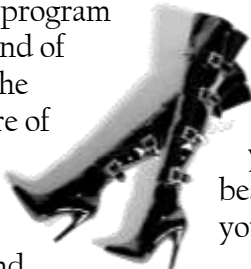
Of course, I have many other ideas for the program. For example, a "big sister / little sister" program, where the one who has been in the program the longest serves as a kind of mentor to one entering the program. I can share more of these ideas over the issues to come.

It isn't likely to get the whole program up and

running before I graduate a year from now. But this provides plenty of time and opportunities to explore our options, And to receive more fantastic ideas from you.

We can still launch a kind of prototype program this fall, when Natasha comes home. Karen discharges a year from now, so she too may be integral to how this program forms. Valjean may be our primary mentor in turning these ideas into something doable.

Especially if she is allowed to come home! (See page 18) Your feedback to all these ideas are more than welcomed. If you can see yourself someday benefiting from this program, then now is a good time to share your input. What are some of the needs you think we can address? What are some of the concerns, like the one's voiced by Satannia? Join us in putting together a TransAction program that helps to demonstrate how proud you can be to live true as the beautifully gender gifted soul you truly are!



SOUNDING OFF - "Oh No She Didn't!"

by Valjean Royal

Needles to say, I'm sure that if you've read my "Letter to Editor" in this 06 issue you will notice that in my own graceful way I had to let Ms Steph know, honey, I "was not" feeling our anniversary issue not being an anniversary to mention.

However, being the understanding trans sister-girl that I am, I had to consider the fact that my dear sistah, friend, comrade, and (last but not least) editor, Ms Steph, is overworked, understaffed, and not getting paid one red cent.

With all this considered, I still want my dang anniversary. I mean, how could this be forgotten? Well, husbands do it all the time, I know, but not your editor. Oh, by the way, did I mention that Steph is also a student, a volunteer in community and other social functions while also seeking employment opportunities? Yes, I did consider all this. Nevertheless, I still cannot stop wishing that somehow our anniversary issue wore our anniversary banner, reflecting all of the hard work and dedication placed into our 1st year of publication. Remember our "Reflections" column? (Issue 02) Another one highlighting all of the most memorable moments we all shared during our first year in print would have been marvelous! Why didn't I suggest any of this in any of my submissions for our 05 issue? Silly me, I forgot!!!

Oh well. Hopefully this bit of forgetfulness will contribute to our second anniversary with Issue 09. Being from all we expect and more, due to "all of our" input. I will do my part.

I hope that the New Year brings a memorable and unforgettable year that will decorate our pages with many of our very own success stories and accomplishments.

And to our dear editor, we love you, girl, but "Sounding Off" gives us an open mike! 😊

In gender loving care,
Valjean

HUMOR by Zoe Kala



Men do not do their women any favors
when leaving the toilet seat down
if their unqualified arrogance
proves they are a bad aim.

The Surgical Art of 'Microfat Grafting'

by **Tsumami Caryl-Averlyn**

Dear Readers and Friends,

It seems that I have been inundated with inquiries about how I got so much *junk in the trunk*, and whether or not it was from hormone use only, or some combination of hormones and exercise. Actually, I've had an augmentation. Yes, there is a little known procedure for it, so I decided to write a brief feature about it in order to perhaps assist and enlighten my sisters whom may be thinking about doing so. The following is based strictly on my own personal experience, and not meant to indicate it is the "only" way, or the best way. It should be noted that results might vary.

My surgeon was Dr. Thomas L. Roberts, III, who runs a surgical center in Spartanburg, S.C., and can be found on line. He is a board certified plastic surgeon, and you should make *sure* that anytime you consider having any type of procedure that the treating physician is board certified.

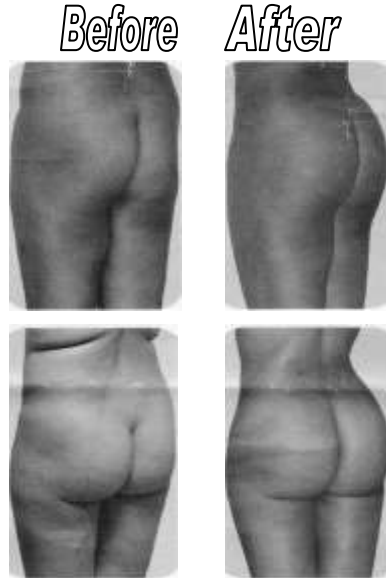
The procedure is called *microfat grafting*. It consists of removing unwanted fat from other areas of the

body, and reintroducing it (usually by injection) into the buttocks. In a lot of cases (depending from where the unwanted fat is extracted) they can use local anesthetic, allowing you to be awake during the procedure. The doctor will rub and tease out the fat. It's sucked into tubes, mixed with protective fluid,

blood, natural oils and living fat cells. When the doctor re-injects the fat, he'll shape and contour it out to a pre-surgery agreed upon shape and size (similar to breast augmentation). Normally, you'll go home within a few hours of the procedure. But you won't be sitting down, or sleeping on your back anytime soon. If you work, plan to take at least two weeks off. Also expect at least 10 to 40 percent of the injected fat to be reabsorbed by the

body over the next year. So, if you emerge from surgery with an enormous "badonkadonk", be sure you wait for the swelling to go down first, *then* the reabsorbing to occur before you know where you stand (or sit in this case).

Because the procedure uses fat from unwanted areas, it's a win/win situation. The accompanying figure shows some examples of before and after the procedure. Good luck, and live true.



My Back Page

In this issue you may notice a shift in focus. Even the layout formats are a bit new. More of my time was spent in exchanging correspondence about the TransAction and TransInjustice program, more postage consumption than usual. Less time left for editing.

Hopefully, I was able to catch all the mistakes, but I'm not counting on it. Until I can find the equipment and space to get more organized, and receive more help, I have come to accept that what you see is the best I can provide for now. Sure hope that doesn't sound like some sad excuse, but right now I think those projects deserve more priority emphasis than how polished the zine looks right now – right after the priority of my academic goals.

Help is materializing, but is hardly keeping pace with the increased workload. Much work is ahead, I know, if these program visions are ever to see the light of day. But I am confident that whatever needs to take place will eventually fall into place.

Thanks for your continued support. Thanks for being your beautiful self, as you strive your best to live true under some amazing circumstances. In gender loving care, Steph.



Next deadline is May 1st, 2007.