

# Illinois Gender Advocates



Advocacy for the Transgender and Gender Variant Community

A §501(c)(3) Charitable Organization

Volume 2 Issue 6

June 2003

## Transgender Pride Event Set for June 21

The 2003 Transgender Pride Event will take place on Saturday, June 21, and will be held from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Gentry on State, located at 440 N. State Street in Chicago. Tickets are \$25 each when purchased in advance, or \$30 at the door. Advance tickets are available from all IGA board members, as well as from several of the vendors who serve the transgender community. You may also order your tickets at the \$25 price by calling the IGA hotline (312-409-5489) or sending e-mail to IGA@genderadvocates.org. Please be sure to state your name and the number of tickets you need. Tickets ordered by telephone or e-mail may be picked up and paid for at the door on the evening of the event.

Parking is available for \$6.00 at 15 W. Illinois for Gentry customers.

Unlike previous years, the 2003 Pride Event will be an informal gathering. Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be available. We will make our own entertainment.

The theme of this year's Pride Event is "A Year to Be Proud Of," and celebrates the legislative inclusion of gender identity in the human rights ordinances of both the City of Chicago and Cook County that occurred last November. The movement to adopt those gender-inclusive amendments was, of course, spearheaded by IGA.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

**The Next Meeting of  
Illinois Gender Advocates  
Will Take Place at 7:30 p.m. on  
Thursday, June 5, 2003  
And Will Be Held at  
New Spirit MC Church  
542 S. Scoville Avenue  
In Oak Park**

### **Whatever**

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*Judge Rules Against F-to-M Father; Let's  
Do Something About It*

*By Beth Plotner*

A Cook County judge recently ruled against an F-to-M husband/father in a divorce and custody battle. In a case lasting almost 4 ½ years, Judge Gerald Bender ruled that the husband/father was not a man for purposes of the Illinois marriage statute. Due to the fact there never was a marriage, no divorce could be granted. On the subject of custody, Judge Bender gave custody over to the child's biological mother.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## Transgender Pride Event Set for June 21

*(Continued From Page 1)*

Our special guests and recipients of this year's Rainbow Awards will be Billy Ocasio, Mike Quigley, and Ambi Tolley. Billy Ocasio is the alderman from Chicago's 26th Ward, who sponsored the bill to include gender identity as part of the Human Rights Ordinance, and who remained steadfast in his support of the legislation despite daunting delays and sniping from various sources. A long-time friend of our community, Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley led the effort to have gender identity included in the County Human Rights Ordinance. Ambi Tolley, a regional supervisor for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), worked closely with IGA's youth coordinator to develop and implement a set of protocols for dealing with transgender youth who become subject to DCFS jurisdiction. Although new protocols normally take several years to implement, Ms. Tolley's dedication and perseverance caused the transgender protocols to be in place in approximately nine months.

The past twelve months are unquestionably a year of which we at IGA can be justifiably proud. Come help us celebrate our achievements and honor our friends on June 21.

### *How to contact us...*

**Illinois Gender Advocates**

47 W. Division St., #391  
Chicago, IL 60610

**Telephone Hotline:**

(312) 409-5489

Please leave a message. We will get back to you as quickly as possible.

**E-Mail:**

IGA@genderadvocates.org

**Web Site Address:**

<http://www.genderadvocates.org>

### **Whatever**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

If you think the case sounds familiar it has been covered in the media. It is also similar to a case in Florida that reached the opposite conclusions. In the Florida case the Judge ruled that the husband/father was a man for purposes of the Florida marriage statute, granted the couple a divorce and gave custody to the father. Who would have thought Florida would come to the right conclusion and Illinois miss the boat?

While there are some differences in the specific facts of the 2 cases they should have been decided the same. In the Florida case the Judge (in an 800 page ruling) really hit the nail on the head that gender is in your brain. Most if not all of us would agree that our gender is a function of what our brains tell us. The Florida Judge felt that current medical science should be a strong factor in looking at these types of cases.

So what can we and what are we doing about the case here in Illinois? The case is being appealed. Not just by the husband/father, but also by the Cook County Guardian's Office who represented the child. As I wrote last month we are helping the father/husband. We are helping to raise money for attorney's fees for the appeal. We already have some contributions. We need more we need your help! Contributions to IGA are considered charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

Let's overturn this ruling and reunite a father with his child.

### *Thanks For Your Help*

IGA would like to acknowledge the generosity of two of our members for their contributions in helping with above custody case. Julie Ann Johnson and Deirdre McCloskey have come to the forefront to help in this fight. We feel that for their current and past generousities to this organization they are deserving of special recognition and thanks.

### **Miranda Writes...**

#### *In the Child's Best Interests*

*By Miranda Stevens-Miller*

*(Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted with permission from the May 7, 2003 issue of Windy City Times.)*

At the end of February, the worldwide transgender community was elated by the news that a Florida court had recognized the rights of a transgender dad to sue for custody of his children, and that the court actually ruled in his favor by awarding custody to Michael Kantaras. This hard-fought win came after years of appallingly bad decisions, in Texas and Kansas, in which the marriages of two transgender women were invalidated because the court claimed they were not women.

The Florida case achieved notoriety because Court TV carried it live during early months of 2002. And after weighing all the evidence for almost a year, the court came to the only reasonable conclusion that it could come to... that Michael Kantaras is a man, was married to his former wife, and it was in the best interests of the children to give him custody.

Last year, a Cook County court was presented with a similar case. A transgender man had married his wife in 1985, had

entered into a contract to raise their child conceived by artificial insemination, had subsequently divorced his wife, and was suing for custody of their 11-year-old son. The father raised the child, and the boy loves his father and wants to live with him. Yet last month Judge Gerald Bender, working with facts very much like the Florida case, not only awarded custody of the child to the mother, but also invalidated both the man's gender and his marriage. Judge Bender declared that there "was no marriage to dissolve" because Illinois law prohibits same-sex marriages.

What's the difference between these cases? Why has Illinois joined the ranks of the great progressive states of Texas and Kansas? What happened in Illinois? For one thing, if you read the local newspapers about the Cook County case, you were probably left with the impression that the father had somehow not met the standard qualifications for gender change within the State of Illinois. In that case, you may have concluded that the judge did make a correct decision in ruling marriage invalid. I myself came to that conclusion based on the facts as presented in the papers. But it was a wrong conclusion.

It may be true that the father had not completed surgery at the time of the marriage, and did not have the legal documentation confirming that his gender is male. But he was hormonally male at the time of marriage, and had been hormonally male since he was a teenager. And he subsequently had surgery and had his legal documentation changed to male.

Also, I recently found out that there is a little known provision in marriage law in Illinois that states something to the effect that if a marriage is found to be invalid because of some legal impediment, and if that impediment is later removed, then the marriage is declared to be a legally sanctioned marriage. In this case, the minor impediment was not having legal documentation stating the father's gender, and it was resolved when he had surgery and obtained the corrected documents.

In addition, there was considerable discussion in the papers about the completeness of the surgery. The father's genital configuration was a major consideration on the part of the judge when he made his ruling on the validity of the marriage. In doing so, the judge has gone against the prevailing laws and standards that allow a transgender man to obtain legal documentation with his correct gender after completing the same surgical procedures that the trans dad had completed.

There are dozens if not hundreds of transgender men walking around Illinois with documentation that states they are male after completing the same surgeries. Is Judge Bender ready to say that they are not men? Is Judge Bender willing to invalidate their marriages as well? Is Judge Bender able to ruin the lives of these men as easily as he was able to ruin the life of the transgender dad in his courtroom?

Furthermore, it is ridiculous that the father's genital configuration was a consideration on the part of the judge when he made his ruling on child custody. What possible

difference would it make in one's ability to be a good parent whether one has genitals of one configuration or another? I thought that custody hearings were about deciding in the best interests of the child. On the one hand we have a mother who has had a long and complex history with substance abuse, but has the "correct" genitals. And on the other we have a loving father, with a child who loves him and wants to live with him, whose name is on the child's birth certificate as the father... but with the "incorrect" genitals. Where are the child's best interests in this picture?

It is so glaringly obvious in this case that the child's best interests were trashed because of Judge Bender's bias against the transgender father. The judge repeatedly referred to the father with the wrong pronouns, and treated him with the utmost disrespect. The father's gender should not have been even a consideration in this custody battle, but it turned out to be the only consideration. I don't know how the decision would have been rendered if the father had not been transgender. More often than not, the ruling goes in favor of the mother. But there are enough nuances in this case that it is quite possible that the father would have been granted primary custody if gender had not been an issue.

It is very likely that this custody case will be appealed. All we would ask is that the father get a fair hearing... one in which the child's best interests really are the first, foremost, and only consideration in the decision.

*Miranda Stevens-Miller welcomes your comments at [MirandaSt1@aol.com](mailto:MirandaSt1@aol.com)*

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## Notes from the Scullery

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### *Take Pride, Take Action!*

*By Diana Williamson*

June is pride month for those of us in the LGBT community. And what better way can we show our pride than to take some action that makes our community a better, safer, and healthier place in which to live?

Being active on behalf of transgender and gender variant issues has never been easier than it is right now. In this month alone, there are several different actions you can take to show your support for the community that are both safe and fun to do. There is, of course, the regular monthly meeting of IGA on Thursday, June 5 (beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the New Spirit MC Church in Oak Park). Our annual Transgender Pride Event ("A Year to Be Proud Of") will take place on Saturday, June 21, at Gentry on State, 440 N. State Street in Chicago, from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. And, of course, there is the annual Pride Parade on Sunday, June 29, starting at 12:00 noon at the corner of Belmont Avenue and N. Halsted Street in Chicago.

We are hoping to have our M-to-F, F-to-M, and youth contingents all represented in the Parade this year.

These are just the events in which IGA is directly involved. In addition, there are numerous other events throughout the month that are sponsored by transgender organizations or which are gender-inclusive.

Although June can be a busy and exciting month for transgender people, our activism should not be limited to just one month out of the year. IGA's new Volunteer Activist program provides a vehicle for all interested persons to become directly and actively involved in shaping the future of this organization, as well as the transgender and LGBT communities in the greater Chicago area and throughout Illinois. The nature and extent of any one person's involvement can be tailored to fit that individual's interests, abilities, and available time.

If being active with IGA holds some appeal for you, please take a few minutes to examine the Volunteer Activist information sheet that is posted in the "Join Us" section of the IGA web site ([www.genderadvocates.org](http://www.genderadvocates.org)). That form, which may be downloaded or printed out directly from the web site, contains a checklist of available volunteer activities. Hopefully, just about everyone in our community will be able to find at least one or two activities that will be of interest.

Anyone who does not have internet access, can still obtain a copy of the Volunteer Activist information sheet by writing to me at the IGA address (47 W. Division St., #391, Chicago, IL 60610), or by telephoning me at the IGA hotline (312-409-5489). I will get a copy in the mail to you as quickly as I can. Of course, you can always obtain a copy from me at any IGA monthly business meeting.

The checklist of activities contained in the Volunteer Activist information sheet is *not* exhaustive. There is a space to specify any potential volunteer activities that were not included in the checklist, making it possible for IGA members to indicate any areas of personal interest that may have been omitted. If the board determines that your suggestion reasonably falls within the IGA mission statement, we will be very pleased to have you undertake the suggested activity. We might also ask you to take charge and assume leadership of the project, if you feel up to the challenge.

In the past, many transgender people were reluctant to become active because they did not want to be publicly "outed." Since I have always believed that to be a completely legitimate concern on the part of many in our community, the new Volunteer Activist program specifically provides a large number of activities that do not require the participant to be seen or identified by the public. For instance, most of the writing and design and artwork can be done in the privacy of your home, and can even be submitted by e-mail. Some of the volunteer work (such as folding, stuffing, and addressing envelopes) will be done in small groups of IGA members, but will not involve any contact with the public. Accordingly, the

need for privacy should no longer interfere with anyone's desire to become active.

Another legitimate concern on the part of many IGA members is the amount of time that is required to be an activist. The new volunteer program recognizes that our members' lives, jobs, families, and other responsibilities will generally have a higher priority than working on behalf of IGA. In order to accommodate this concern, participants are asked to set their own schedules in terms of the amount of time spent in volunteer work. We are grateful for any amount of time that you can devote to IGA business, even if it is only a few hours each year.

We at IGA want to be as inclusive as possible of all segments of our diverse community. We also want to be as responsive as possible to our community's needs. One way to achieve these goals is to involve as many members of our community as we can in the Volunteer Activist program. So we are urging you to help us help our community by becoming active with us.

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## What a Year It's Been

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*By Beth Plotner*

It most certainly has. And it's time we had a little celebration. For those of you who may have missed it elsewhere in this month's newsletter, that's is the theme of this year's Pride Event. The event this year will be June 21<sup>st</sup> at Gentry on State from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.

If you don't think it's been quite a year let's take a look back at all that's happened since we had our last Pride Event. We passed anti-discrimination ordinances in Chicago and Cook County. Decatur, Springfield and Peoria have also passed gender identity inclusive ordinances. Not to mention the many other jurisdictions that also passed similar laws and ordinances. There have been some favorable court rulings around the country.

IGA evolved into a not for profit organization and we started on our first 3 areas of advocacy, Legal, Legislative and Youth. With the Youth we started TYRA (Transgendered Youth Resource and Advocacy) and the Wednesday night youth drop in. We also have a TV show on Chicago Access Network cable television.

So let's take some time and celebrate how far we've come in the past year. And we should celebrate. This has been an historic year for the community from coast to coast and points in between.

At this years celebration we will be honoring, Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley, Alderman Billy Ocasio and Ambi Tolley. Mike and Billy are being honored for their introduction of the anti-discrimination ordinances. Ambi who

is with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is being honored for her work in having DCFS develop guidelines for Transgender youth in the system.

After we're done with our celebration it will be back to work. Helping to get SB101 passed so we have statewide protection. Continuing with our legal advocacy in helping a FtM father get custody of his child back. There are many other things we're working on as well. So come and celebrate with us.

But just don't celebrate with us, join us. Help us in our work, get involved. Make the celebration last all year.

## ***Feedback...***

Problems? Questions? Disagreements? Want to submit an article? Please write to us. We love to get mail.

### **Board Members of Illinois Gender Advocates:**

#### **Chair:**

Beth Plotner  
BethP@genderadvocates.org

#### **Vice Chair:**

Diana Williamson  
DianaW@genderadvocates.org

#### **Secretary:**

Rebecca Davis  
RebeccaD@genderadvocates.org

#### **Treasurer:**

Marsha Jackson  
MarshaJ@genderadvocates.org

#### **Legislative Director:**

Miranda Stevens-Miller  
MirandaM@genderadvocates.org

#### **Development Director:**

Jacob B. Mueller  
JacobM@genderadvocates.org

#### **Directors at Large:**

Sara Fenwick  
fenwick87@attbi.com

Toni Monzo  
msanthonia@yahoo.com

## **Minutes for the Monthly Meeting of May 2003**

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*By Rebecca Davis, Secretary*

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM on May 1, 2003. Eleven people including the officers were in attendance.

**Legislative:** Beth standing in for Miranda gave the update. Beth told the group that she had attended a meeting on this bill at Carol Ronen's office and was informed that currently there are 21 'yes' votes, 7 'maybes'. Thirty votes are needed to pass the bill. No Republicans support the bill and there are some Democrats who will vote 'no' at this time. The vote on the bill has been pushed out in the hopes that additional support for passage can be gathered. Of the Democrats who have inferred they would vote 'no', the only one vocally opposing the bill has been Denny Jacobs. Those supporting the bill are looking at amending the bill to garner additional support by giving employers the right to enforce a dress code.

Peoria became the latest city in Illinois to pass a non-discrimination ordinance.

On the national front, there is still disagreement on the bathroom issue between Rep. Barney Franks and the Human Rights Campaign. This makes support for ENDA that much more difficult.

**Legal:** Beth spoke about the case in Illinois where a F-to-M man has been denied custody of his children by the courts even though the children have stated they would prefer being with their father. This case had the opposite outcome of a case in Florida where custody was granted to the F-to-M father.

**Youth:** We are very sorry to say that Josephine Christopher has resigned as Director of Youth Advocacy due to financial obligations. Josie is still currently running the IGA youth drop-in and according to Beth would like to continue to run the program at a later date. We wish her the best of luck and will miss her support and dedication to the IGA youth program. Hopefully, she will be back to run the program again soon.

The word is still getting out on the IGA youth program and we are hoping for an increased attendance at the IGA drop-in. It is on Wednesday nights at Holy Covenant church at 900 W. Diversey.

**Pride Event:** There were no updates on the IGA Pride event at the meeting. But we have received additional information as of this writing. The pride event has a date, place and even a name: A Year To Be Proud Of. . . . Illinois Gender Advocates Pride 2003. June 21, 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. At Gentry on State, 440 N. State St. Cost : \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. There is \$6. Parking at 15 W. Illinois for Gentry customers. Hors d'oeuvres: TBA

**Parade:** IGA will participate in this year's Pride Parade on June 29, 2003. We would like to have both transmen and transyouth join us in the parade. Please contact Marsha Jackson for more info or if you would like to volunteer for the parade. Her e-mail address is in this newsletter.

**Volunteers:** Diana circulated IGA's new volunteer activist form at the meeting. The purpose of the form is to promote volunteering for different events and functions that are supported or attended by IGA members. Volunteers are always welcome and needed by IGA so please contact Diana Williamson for opportunities to help IGA and the transgender community.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 PM.

## **Be Sure to Attend Our Next Meeting**

Our next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. at the New Spirit Metropolitan Community Church, located at 542 S. Scoville Avenue in Oak Park. Please enter by the side door on Adams Street, then go up the stairs and turn right to the meeting room. Ample free parking is available on the street.

## **Thanks to Our Contributors:**

A big thank you goes out to those who contributed articles to the newsletter this month. It is really appreciated from month to month. Thanks!

- Miranda Stevens-Miller
- Diana Williamson
- NGLTF
- Beth Plotner
- Rebecca Davis

## **More Than One Third of Gay College Students Experienced Harassment in Past Year**

*Half Conceal Sexual Orientation to Avoid Intimidation; 43% Call Their Campus Homophobic*

*From National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)*

"... 'coming out' to my adviser would destroy my academic career."

"... people in passing cars have screamed 'faggot' at me."

"I think the administration can do more to enforce safety & policies that will help GLBT students..."

--Responses to the Campus Climate Assessment Survey

May 6, 2003, New York, NY – With students and professors finishing up final exams and incoming college freshmen finalizing their college plans, today the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Policy Institute released the largest-ever study of the climate on U.S. college campuses toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) students, faculty and staff. "Campus Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People: A National Perspective," authored by Dr. Susan R. Rankin, found that more than one in three GLBT undergraduate students have experienced anti-gay harassment within the past year. Almost 1,700 students, faculty, administrators and staff in 14 colleges and universities throughout the country were surveyed for the report.

"It is extremely alarming that, in 2003, people on college campuses continue to experience anti-GLBT harassment," said National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Executive Director Lorri L. Jean. "Higher learning institutions should be at the forefront of educating people about the damage of homophobic and transphobic acts. Because most of the fourteen universities surveyed provide visible support through pro-GLBT policies and resources, we can only imagine the extent of homophobia on college campuses across the country."

"Campus Climate" reveals that almost a fifth of respondents had feared for their physical safety in the last year because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and 43 percent considered the climate of their campus to be homophobic.

Other findings include:

- 41 percent of the respondents stated that their college/university was not addressing issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity;
- 51 percent of the respondents concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation; and,
- 71 percent felt that transgender people were likely to suffer harassment, and 61 percent felt that gay men and lesbians were likely to be harassed.

"While there have been significant improvements over the past decade, clearly harassment and bias are still major concerns for GLBT students, faculty and staff," said Dr. Sean Cahill, NGLTF Policy Institute Director. "Almost all of the universities that agreed to participate in the survey have sexual orientation nondiscrimination policies and/or GLBT campus centers. However, most of the United States' more than 5,500 colleges and universities don't have such policies or programs in effect."

While most universities and colleges publicly commit to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, their actions and policies often do not support these goals. In March 2003, Virginia Tech's governing board voted to eliminate its affirmative action policy and to remove sexual orientation

from its nondiscrimination policy. When Virginia Tech students and staff protested, the university reinstated both policies.

An April 24, 2003 story in the California “San Diego Union-Tribune” reported that frustrated by a resurgence of racially and sexually motivated incidents, dozens of University of San Diego students and faculty walked out of classes and urged the administration to address anti-gay, racist and anti-Semitic sentiments on campus. Recent incidents cited by the paper included anti-gay graffiti scratched on a student’s apartment door. The University of Southern California’s Pridefest has been marred by anti-gay vandalism in recent years. And activists at universities across the country complain that signs for GLBT student activities are regularly ripped down and covered with anti-GLBT graffiti.

“Many GLBT campus members find that they must hide significant parts of their identity, thereby isolating themselves socially or emotionally,” said Dr. Susan R. Rankin, “Campus Climate” author and lead researcher. “Those who do not hide their sexual orientation or gender identity have a range of experiences including discrimination, verbal or physical harassment, and subtle or outright silencing. While higher education provides a variety of opportunities for students and others, these are greatly limited for those who fear for their safety, feel they must censor themselves, or are denied opportunities because of their sexual orientation or gender identity,” said Rankin, a Senior Diversity Planning Analyst at the Pennsylvania State University. “We hope this report will assist educators, activists, student leaders and elected officials in making universities safer and more accepting of GLBT people.”

“Campus Climate” makes policy recommendations to universities and colleges that are seeking to create a truly inclusive environment that supports and values all, including:

- Extending employee spousal benefits to domestic partners;
- Including sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in the institution’s nondiscrimination clause;
- Integrating GLBT concerns into university documents/publications;
- Providing a clear, safe, visible means of reporting acts of intolerance and responding expeditiously to such acts; and,
- Including sexual orientation and gender identity issues in orientation programs and employee trainings.

The “Campus Climate Assessment Survey,” which serves as the basis for this report, was a collaborative project involving NGLTF, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, and the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education.

*Founded in 1973, NGLTF works to eliminate prejudice, violence and injustice against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people at the local, state and national level. As part of a broader social justice movement for freedom, justice and equality, NGLTF is creating a world that respects and celebrates the diversity of human expression and identity where all people may fully participate in society.*

## **Transgendered People as Part of American Society**

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*By Rebecca Davis*

On Saturday, May 17, 2003, I had the opportunity to speak to a group of graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Chicago. The group was touring several GLBT organizations in the Chicago area including the Howard Brown clinic and the Women and Children First bookstore in Andersonville. The tour was sponsored by the University Community Service Center to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the GLBT community by these students.

Since my transition, I had never spoken to a group of people especially in the capacity of a representative of IGA and the transgender community. From this experience I found out that transgendered people are either:

1. Totally blended into society
2. Entirely closeted
3. Too few to actually know one
4. Invisible

Why do I say this? The more I meet with people, not just in a speaking situation, but in everyday life I find that very few people know what a transgendered person is. The very first question from the group was “What does transgendered mean?” Being a transsexual I thought this was an easy question. And if I only considered my own circumstances it would have been. But if you consider all of the people that are put under the transgender “umbrella” it becomes a very difficult question. Transsexuals, transvestites, cross-dressers, drag queens, etc. are all lumped into the general category of transgender. Most people need a simple way to categorize certain things in life. Male or female, gay or straight, good or evil, Democrat or Republican. The problem that I see people having with transgendered people is that we don’t “fit” into a simple category or definition. And harder yet for most people is the fact that there is no criteria to categorize us. How do you categorize transgendered people? By anatomy, sexual preference, appearance, mannerisms? There is no one “box” that we fit into, and that is what is so confusing to most people. To add to the confusion, there is always some expert or study being done to stuff all of us into one category or another. Prof. Michael Bailey of Northwestern University is the latest one to put forth his book which separates

transsexuals into one of two categories and has caused some controversy.

What is the answer? It is simple and it is not anything new or complicated. Think of each person as an individual, not as part of some homogenous group. This answer is the same no matter if you are talking about transgendered people, race, religion, or ethnicity. Face it, people are all different. But each person is a valuable part of society.

The next thing we can do is get out there and let the rest of the world see us and get to know us. Then maybe the only

reaction that there will be to the folks claiming that we are a “threat to family and society” will be laughter. The group I spoke to was very open and accepting as I have found most people to be when you are honest and open with them. Remember also that if you are uneasy around them, they will be uneasy around you. I was terrified to be around people when I was first transitioning but I have found out that there are more tolerant and accepting people out there than there are those that are intolerant. Don’t take my word for it, get out there and see for yourself.

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## Application for New or Renewal Membership

YES, I would like to join (\_\_\_\_\_) or renew (\_\_\_\_\_) my membership in Illinois Gender Advocates.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name to Be Used on Mailing Label (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Level (check one):

(\_\_\_\_\_) Student/Youth - \$10 (\_\_\_\_\_) Regular Membership - \$30  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Supporting Member - \$100 (\_\_\_\_\_) Benefactor - \$250  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Other - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to be involved with Illinois Gender Advocates? (Please check all that apply.)

(\_\_\_\_\_) Keep informed by newsletters (\_\_\_\_\_) Participate in monthly meetings  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Participate in actions (\_\_\_\_\_) Join a working group or committee  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Liaison with other human rights groups. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Do you have any special skills that could help us out? (legal / legislative, artistic / design, technical / computer) Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been a victim of a hate crime or discriminated against because of your gender identity, expression, or image? Yes / No (circle one)

If yes, may we document your case for our report? Yes / No (circle one)

Please mail, along with your check or money order, to:  
**Illinois Gender Advocates, 47 W. Division St., #391, Chicago, IL 60610**