



# IT'S TIME, ILLINOIS...

...FOR FREEDOM OF  
GENDER EXPRESSION!

Political Action for the Transgender Community

Volume 8 Issue 7

July 2002

## **Annual Chicago Pride Event... Help It's Time Illinois Sticker the Parade!**

On June 30, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Chicago Pride Parade will take place, starting at noon (please note time change from previous years). This is one of the largest parades in the city, with about 750,000 people lining the parade route. We have prepared a huge banner, and thousands of stickers and posters, enough for every participant and every float entered in the parade, with the message:

**"I Support the Gender Identity Amendment."**

We are inviting all members of the Chicagoland Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community to help bring awareness and gain support of the Chicago Gender Identity Amendment by proudly displaying posters and wearing a sticker in solidarity with the transgender community.

We are also inviting everyone to march with It's Time Illinois and help us carry the "Support the Gender Identity Amendment" banner in the Pride Parade, and to help us distribute the posters and stickers.

Please join It's Time, Illinois on the morning of Chicago Pride Parade as we line up on Halsted south of Belmont to Sticker the Parade for the Gender Identity Amendment

**The Next Meeting of  
It's Time, Illinois  
Will Take Place at 7:30 p.m. on  
Thursday, August 1, 2002  
at Transformations  
146 N Oak Park Avenue  
in Oak Park**

*Please note:*

*There will be no July meeting, as the meeting date would be the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.*

## **WHATEVER**

*By Beth Plotner*

"Let's Keep it Going"

Can you feel the momentum building? I hope you can. There seems to be more and more support for the amendment to Chicago's Human Rights Ordinance to include Gender Identity.

At Mayor Daley's Pride Reception, Laura Rissover, the Chair for the Advisory Council on Gay and Lesbian Issues (ACGLI) of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, spoke very eloquently, about the need for inclusion. For those of you who weren't at the reception

*(Continued on page 2)*

I urge you to read what she said. You'll find a reprint of her speech elsewhere in the newsletter. Thank you Laura for your words of support.

But Laura wasn't alone in mentioning the need for amending the ordinance. Ken Gunn the assistant Chairman at the Commission mentioned the need for the amendment. Thank you Ken. Bill Graves, the mayor's liaison to the community also mentioned the need for the amendment. Thank you Bill. After the reception the Windy City Times and Chicago Free Press asked Mayor Daley if he supported the amendment. His answer was yes. Thank you Mayor Daley.

Of course Robert Castillo (this year's recipient of the It's Time Rainbow Award) was there. This year he was passing out buttons that said "I support the Gender Identity Amendment." Robert brought hundreds of these buttons and you could see hundreds of people wearing them. Once again thank you Robert.

So the momentum is building and **we have to keep it going!** We still need to get alderman to sign on to this amendment. If you haven't contacted your alderman please do so. If you could meet with her/him in person that would be great. At least write a letter of support. If you don't know what to say we can help. If you don't know who your Alderman is we can help. If don't live in the City but have friends and relatives who do please urge them to contact their Alderman.

We are looking for people in the City who don't live in the lakefront wards. We have to have people come forward from every part of the city. Because we live in every part of the City and so do our supporters. So let's keep this thing going and going. We need to help those who are victims of discrimination in Chicago. Let Chicago join the growing list of cities. We've come this far let's not derail this thing.

## **It's All About Me... NOT!**

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*By Lisa Scheps*

Pride – Pride – Pride – Pride – Pride -- Pride

That seems to be the theme song of June all over this country. And for good reason, it is important to be proud of who and what you are. But June is over and it

is time to move on! What are we gonna do now? Well, I have a great idea. Wanna hear it? I thought so.

But first, a message from our sponsor:

Remember, there is still much work to be done to ensure the passage of the amendment to the City's civil rights ordinance. Call or write your Alderman if you live or work in the city of Chicago. Tell her (or him) that you are a constituent and you support human rights for all citizens and you urge them to support the Hansen, Acasio, Schulter amendment.

Thank you. Now, back to our regularly scheduled column.

As I talk to people in the gender community, both everyday people like us and the national leadership, there is one subject that keeps rearing its ugly head. Yes, you guessed it – the lack of unity in our community. (I guess we're not a community at all, we're just a comm). Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE agrees that we need unity, but it just doesn't seem to happen.

To me the key is understanding and celebrating our differences instead of insisting that "my way is the right way, and to hell with anyone else." I like metaphors, don't you? Let's use one. An orchestra is comprised of many different things that have one major thing in common, the ability to make musical tones. Each instrument has its own 'agenda,' but also has the ultimate goal of working in concert with its fellow instruments to form music.

So, we've arrived at the concert and we're waiting for the music to begin. The orchestra is all out on stage and warming up – doing their own thing. Oy! It sounds like mish mash, a cacophony of sound. Not too pleasing to the ears. But the conductor enters and brings them together, playing the same song, in unison, and it sounds simple and pleasant. Then it really flowers and takes on new life when they play in harmony with each other. All of the instruments are using their individual strengths to make a powerful performance with complexity and richness.

Ok, how hokey was that metaphor. I'll say what you're thinking: VERY HOKEY. But it is true. That's what the transgender community needs to do – play in concert with one another, play in harmony, and most important, play the same song.

So Lisa, how can we accomplish this lofty goal of all of the transgender community speaking from one voice in harmony? I know, how about we make a human chain across America? What if we have a rock concert, we can call it TransAide? How 'bout the Million Trans March? There are loads and load of ideas out there, some good and some not so good. But how about this one. What if we were to claim a month – say November, the month of the Day of Remembrance – and make it Trans Unity Month?

And during that month we put down our petty differences and exclusionary practices and come together – Transsexual, crossdresser, drag queen, drag king, gender queer, questioning, and all of the other things that we call ourselves. We don't even have to organize an event! We can just be! We can simply celebrate the diversity within our own community – *Transunity!* (perhaps, I've created a new word)

If we play our cards right, *Transunity* Month will catch on and pretty soon, we'll have a month where all over the country, the transgender community will organize lots of different *Transunity* events all playing the same song, but in harmony! That sounds beautiful to me.

Well, that's my idea. After all, It's all about me.... NOT!

## **Robert Castillo Receives 2002 Rainbow Award**

The ITI Pride Event provided the backdrop for the presentation of the 2002 Rainbow Award to Robert Castillo. "The efforts that Robert has made on behalf of the community are enormous," according to Beth Plotner, ITI Chair. "He is deeply involved in the efforts to amend the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance and the Fair Housing Ordinance to include gender identity."

Born in Chicago, Robert has been an active member of Chicago's queer community for the past 12 years. An outspoken activist and organizer, Castillo's first taste of activism came when, as a teenager, he helped organize

neighborhood youth to oppose a plan to build a parking lot on the local playground's softball field. Though that effort was unsuccessful, the experience provided a valuable lesson in how to organize. In 1991, while as a student at Northeastern Illinois University, he joined the then Gay and Lesbian Alliance and quickly became the group's male co-chair and helped the organization become one of the most visible and active on campus. Castillo would also go on to become a member of the University's Student Senate.

His activism has included work with numerous community organizations including Queer Nation/Chicago, the Association of Latin Men for Action (ALMA), ACT UP/Chicago, Horizons Anti-Violence Project, Logan Square Gay Lesbian Bisexual & Transgender Neighbors, the Coalition for Positive Sexuality (CPS), Gay Lesbian Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA), the People of Color Coalition and the Comité Organizador of Chicago. He has been recognized for his work with awards from ALMA, Horizons Anti-Violence Project, the National Latino/a Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Organization (LLEGO) and was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2001. In addition to his activism, Castillo has been a contributor to *En La Vida*, a monthly magazine for LGBTQ Latinas/os, since 1996.

Currently, Castillo serves on the City of Chicago's Advisory Council on Gay and Lesbian Issues.

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

It's Time, Illinois, 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**

[ItsTimeIL@aol.com](mailto:ItsTimeIL@aol.com)

#### **World Wide Web Address:**

<http://ItsTimeIL.org>

#### **It's Time, America!**

<http://gender.org/ita>

## **Rissover Urges Transgender Inclusion in City Ordinances**

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*Remarks by Laura Rissover, Chair of the Advisory Council on Gay and Lesbian Issues*

At the end of March my family took a road trip. My son was on spring break from kindergarten, so we loaded up the minivan, and along with half the Midwest headed for Florida. We planned an overnight stay in Memphis, so we could visit the National Human Rights Museum.

If you have never been there, let me tell you that it is an emotional experience. The museum is built in and around the Lorraine Hotel where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, and houses the stories and pictures of so many who fought for equality and civil rights. It is sacred ground.

Inside the museum, I followed my three-year-old daughter up the bus steps into the Rosa Parks exhibit. A few women who had entered before us were already sitting on seats in the bus. As my daughter passed the driver's seat, we heard a recorded voice tell a woman to give up her seat and move back. As I stepped past the driver, a louder and impatient voice again instructed the woman to give up her seat and move to the back of the bus.

Suddenly, a roar filled the bus, as the voice threatened the woman for her refusal to give up her seat, and commanded that she move immediately. Everyone on the bus was startled, and my daughter began to cry. As I picked her up, a woman on the bus said "Poor thing. That was scary." I agreed that it was.

I, too, had been frightened even though I knew it was a recording. I was in no real danger. As I comforted my daughter, I thought not only of Rosa Parks, but of everyone who had been on that bus. On all of those buses. At all of those lunch counters, and drinking fountains, and public restrooms.

Again I was reminded that many of the turning points of our civil rights movements have occurred when ordinary people have simply said

Enough.

No More.

I am tired and I am scared, but I draw the line here.

In June we celebrate our Pride, but also our struggle. In 1969, a movement that had been smoldering caught fire. Ordinary people, who were tired of running, scared of being arrested, of having their names published in the newspaper and losing their jobs, said

Enough.

No More.

And they drew the line at the Stonewall Inn.

In riots that would last for days Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and yes, Transgendered people -- ordinary people -- changed my life, and that of everyone in this room. Seeds planted in the sixties have given bloom to civil rights legislation in the decades that followed. Yet we have more to do.

Chicago's Human Rights Ordinance and Fair Housing Ordinance do not yet include protection based on Gender Identity. I say 'not yet' because I know that it will. It has to, or how can we look ourselves in the eye? Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation is so closely tied to discrimination based on Gender Identity that it is difficult to tell where one leaves off and the other begins.

In the fight for civil rights we talk of allies. Welcoming our straight allies in our fight for equality. Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual people are the allies to the Transgendered community, and it is time that we took our place at the forefront of this movement.

And let's remember, too, that our communities overlap and intersect each other. Every man or woman of whatever sexual orientation who does not conform to society's notions of appropriate dress or behavior is transgendered. A woman in a man's suit, or a boy who 'throws like a girl'. This is truly our fight.

I am already planning for next June. For a Pride month celebration with an even larger guest list. All I need are some volunteers for the planning committee. Ordinary people -- perhaps you. Now is the time for us to come together and secure passage of an amended Human Rights Ordinance. One that includes Gender Identity.

If we come together on this, I am certain of our success. Let's plan now to meet back here in a year, to celebrate.

Maybe I'll even wear a dress.

## **Thanks to Our Contributors**

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Thanks to the following individuals who have contributed articles to this month's newsletter:

Beth Plotner

Tina Sievers

Lisa Scheps

Laura Rissover

## Minutes of July Meeting

*Submitted by Tina Sievers*

The July meeting of ITI took place at transGENESIS, in Chicago. Present were: Lorraine Sade Baskerville, Robert Castillo, Gary Garman, Kelly Hill, Rachael Hobson, Marsha Jackson, Julie Ann Johnson, Janine Kelley, Tom Mannis, Russell Meyers, Toni Monzo, Charyla Parker, Shannon Parker, John Pennycraft, Beth Plotner, Lisa Scheps, Miranda Stevens-Miller, Toby Trabert and Tina Sievers.

The meeting began at 7:47 pm. Beth thanked Lorraine for providing the space for the meeting.

Miranda distributed an article from the Windy City Times stating that Mayor Daley is on record in favor of the ordinance. Eight alderman have signed on as of this date. We still need more Chicago residents to visit their alderman and get commitments from them.

At this point, 45 jurisdictions have passed legislation. There was a training held on June 4, with Mary Morton, for those individuals who have volunteered to contact their alderman. Another session will be held in a couple of weeks. The goal is to get 30 signatures of alderman by August.

Both Beth and Miranda made a plea for help to those living in the city to held. It is up to the gender community, with our allies, to make this pass.

Beth commented briefly on the State Bill (HB 101). Nothing new has happened at this point. It is sitting in committee in the Senate, and will probably not be brought up this year.

Lisa Scheps discussed the Pride Event, which will be this Saturday. The program booklet is done, and Toby distributed a copy of it. Fliers are out, the Rainbow Award winner will be Robert Castillo, and there were many members who donated tickets. There will probably be slightly less than 100 people at the event, which is being held at The Big House on Halsted.

Lorraine mentioned that she has tickets to the transGENESIS event, which will be held on June 15, from 7-10 pm, at the DuSable Museum. They will also be presenting their awards, and the proceeds go to support the tPass program at transGENESIS.

The Chicago Pride Parade will be held on Sunday, June 30, at noon. Last year an estimated 750,000 people were on hand. Marsha is providing a truck for our entry, and ideas and help are needed.

Robert Castillo distributed buttons in support of the Gender Identity Amendment. Over 300 were passed out at the Mayor's reception. On June 18, the Advisory Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues (ACGLE) will be having a meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Lorainne commented that transGENESIS is looking for more board members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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

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

#### **It's Time, Illinois! Board Members:**

##### **Chair:**

Beth Plotner

Beth@itstimeil.org

##### **First Vice Chair:**

Lisa Scheps

Lisa@itstimeil.org

##### **Second Vice Chair:**

Marsha Jackson

Marsha@itstimeil.org

##### **Secretary:**

Tina Sievers

Tina@itstimeil.org

##### **Treasurer:**

Carole Abrams

Carole@itstimeil.org

##### **Past Chair:**

Miranda Stevens-Miller

Miranda@itstimeil.org

## **Court Rejects School Teacher's Lawsuit Seeking To Keep Transgender Employee from Bathrooms**

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MINNEAPOLIS -- A federal appeals court today said a Minneapolis public school met its legal obligation by giving alternate restroom options to a teacher who did not want to use the same facilities as a male-to-female transgendered employee, in what the American Civil Liberties Union called a "watershed victory" for the rights of transgendered people.

Southwest High School teacher Carla Cruzan complained that allowing transgendered library employee Debra Davis to use the women's bathroom violated Cruzan's religious freedom and created a hostile workplace based on sex. As a result, the school provided Cruzan with ready access to several other bathrooms, including single-person facilities and other women's restrooms. Unsatisfied with the school's accommodation for her, Cruzan asked a federal court to block Davis from using the women's restrooms at school. She lost and appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit, in St. Louis.

"This case had two common threads that we see all across the country -- someone didn't want a transgendered person to have basic access to restrooms and then used religion as a smokescreen for blatant discrimination," said Tamara Lange, an ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project staff attorney who wrote a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the school.

"Carla Cruzan was the person who thought there was a problem here, so the school was right to find some other alternative for her -- not for the transgendered employee," Lange said. "This is a watershed victory that tells employers and businesses nationwide that they can't deny a transgendered person basic rights based on someone's dislike for the person."

In today's unanimous ruling, a three-judge panel of the federal appeals court upheld the school district's restroom policy, saying, "The school district's policy was not directed at Cruzan and Cruzan had convenient access to a number of restrooms other than the one Davis used. Cruzan does not assert Davis engaged in any inappropriate conduct other than merely being present in the women's faculty restroom. Given the totality of the

circumstances, we conclude a reasonable person would not have found the work environment hostile or abusive."

The ACLU's friend-of-the-court brief, filed earlier this year, said that Cruzan, not the school, was unreasonable when she demanded that the school allow her own personal beliefs to dictate Davis' use of school restrooms. The ACLU, filing on behalf of groups including the Minnesota chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, also noted that students, teachers, staff and parents at Southwest High School roundly supported Davis and the school's handling of the situation.

"The Minneapolis Public Schools have shown a willingness to learn about and support the needs and concerns of LGBT students, parents and staff. From students who plastered the walls with signs supporting Debra to the Out4Good office in the Minneapolis district itself - this community is a model for every school in the country," said J.J. Kahle, Co-Chair of GLSEN Minnesota. "Debra was supported so she could continue doing her good work in the library. While it's too bad that Carla Cruzan is intolerant, her concerns were addressed by finding other restrooms she can use."

Minnesota is one of just two states that explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender identity - but that civil rights law is not at issue because this case is about whether Cruzan was discriminated against by the school's accommodation of a transgendered employee. The ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project is currently litigating a New York City case claiming that a landlord violated existing sex discrimination laws by evicting a social services agency because its transgendered clients used restrooms consistent with their gender identities. More on that case is online at: <http://www.aclu.org/news/2001/n062601a.html>

## **New Jersey Assembly Approves Transgender Inclusive Safe Schools Bill**

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TRENTON, June 20, 2002 --- The New Jersey Assembly voted 74-0 (with 2 abstentions) today to approve a transgender inclusive safe schools bill. The bill was approved by the Assembly education committee last Monday, after GRAANJ, GLSEN, the NJ Lesbian and Gay Coalition, and other progressive and allied groups presented powerful testimony in support.

The State Senate Education Committee approved the bill by a 6-1 vote in May. It is not known when the full Senate will vote on it, but prospects appear good.

If approved, this will be the first piece of statewide legislation in New Jersey to contain "gender identity and expression" as a separate protected category.

GRAANJ representatives also took part today in a briefing session in Trenton organized by Lambda Legal Defense concerning a suit that will be filed next week seeking to have the state's refusal to allow same-sex marriages declared unconstitutional. We were warmly welcomed by the NJLGC, Stonewall Democrats and Lambda as partners in this effort.

## **Daley Backs Gender Law**

*From the Windy City Times*

The proposed inclusion of coverage for gender-variant people in the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance was front and center at Mayor Daley's annual Pride Reception on Monday night (June 5) at the Cultural Center. They Mayor's liaison Bill Greaves and Laura Rissover, head of the Advisory Council on Gay and Lesbian Issues, both spoke strongly in favor of the measure, and Daley, asked during the reception about his position, said "yes" he does support the bill, and his staff is looking into it for slight modifications. AGLI members passed out buttons in support of the bill, and most attendees enthusiastically supported the plan.

## **Florida teen sues over yearbook omission**

*Tom Musbach, Gay.com*

A teen-age lesbian in Tampa, Fla., sued the school district in federal court Wednesday because her school omitted her from the yearbook after she refused to be photographed in a feminine outfit.

Nikki Youngblood, 17, charges the school with sex discrimination and violation of her right to free expression.

Unlike other women in the senior class at Robinson High School, Youngblood refused to wear the "frilly

drape" required for graduation photos. She said that she never wore traditionally feminine clothes to school, and to do so for her portrait would not reflect who she is.

"Nikki is not a rebellious kid," said her lawyer, Karen Doering. "She genuinely wanted to appear as herself. It would have been a joke to her, her friends and her family if she wore that drape, because that is not how she dressed."

A lawyer for the Hillsborough County school district, Mark Hart, told the Tampa Tribune, "I think this is a case of a gay rights group making a political statement at the expense of a school, and that's unfortunate."

Last month Doering, a staff attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, challenged another high school in the Hillsborough district over its policy requiring women to wear skirts or dresses beneath their graduation robes. Faced with legal action, the school changed its policy.

"The school board wants to cling to their stereotypes of what females are supposed to look like," Doering told the Gay.com / PlanetOut.com Network. "That's at the root of this. It's sex discrimination, pure and simple."

Outside the courthouse in Tampa, Youngblood said her omission from the yearbook made it seem like she had never attended the school.

"If I can change this (for future students), it would be wonderful," she said.

## **Articles Welcome**

Have an idea for a story for the ITI Newsletter. We are constantly looking for articles for the newsletter. If you have information that you would like to submit for a story, please send it to Tina Sievers, Newsletter Editor, at [Tina@stimeil.org](mailto:Tina@stimeil.org).

Articles are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding publication. All submissions will be considered for publication, space permitting.

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## Application for New or Renewal Membership

YES, I would like to join  or renew  my membership in It's Time, Illinois!

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):

Annual - \$15       Supporting - \$35       Household - \$50       Sustaining - \$75

Benefactor - \$150       Lifetime - \$250       Other - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to be involved with It's Time Illinois? (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

If yes, may we document your case for our report?  Yes       No

Please mail, along with your check or money order, to:

**It's Time, Illinois, 47 W Division St, # 391**

**Chicago, IL 60610**