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. **LATE BREAKING NEWS:**
Sad news:

NATIONAL TRANSGENDER LEADER, HONORED IN DEATH

(Houston) National transgender community leader, Dee Skene McKellar, died on Saturday evening, September 6th, as she and her friends were being assigned their rounds with the Q-Patrol, a neighborhood watch group. She was felled by a massive heart attack and died before reaching the hospital. CPR was begun and Houston's EMS arrived within minutes of the attack. They treated McKellar, a well-know, non-surgical transsexual, with the utmost of professionalism and respect.

During the next day, many of her friends gathered along with Dee's daughter and planned for the activist's remembrance. The service will be an open casket, gravesite service on Saturday, September 13th, at 11AM, at the Woodlawn Cemetery, I-10 West, exit at Antoine. Everyone that knew and loved Dee (or David, as she was known in the NASA area prior to 1991) is invited. The Q-Patrol will serve as honor guard and all transgendered activists are encouraged to wear whatever activist t-shirt they may possess to the service. Anyone wishing to visit with Dee prior to Saturday may do so at the funeral home chapel: Cremation Service International, 5601 Arlington, Houston (near Tidwell and I-45 North) 713-692-5555 on Thursday and Friday from 10AM to 9PM.

Dee McKellar was a national leader in the transgender community. In 1991, she was one of the founding committee members for what has become the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP) now in its seventh year. She served as a Director and as its Secretary for several years. With Dee's assistance and push, ICTLEP has been in the foreground of transgender re-intergration within the lesbian/gay/bisexual community. Dee assisted in organizing, and attended, both the 2nd National Transgender Event in Washington DC in October 1995 and the 3rd National Transgender Event in Washington DC in February 1997. She spoke to countless people needing help who called, wrote or e-mailed the ICTLEP office.

While serving as a Director of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, Dee served on the NLGLA committee responsible for the unanimous NLGLA Board vote in August 1997 that brought bisexuals and transgenders fully within the bylaws of that organization. Dee also served as a Director of Gender PAC for a short time assisting with organizational and bylaw procedures.

At the state level, Dee was one of four who planned, and one of twelve who participated in the transgender protest of the 1995 Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby's March on Austin in the spring of 1995 in Austin. This LGRL event was to call attention of Legislators to violence and hate crimes against gays and lesbians. The transgenders who were with Dee resented being purposefully left out of the LGRL push. As a result of the protest, most of the LGRL marchers were persuaded that the TG protest was right and proper and that TG issues of violence and hate crimes were the same issues as the gay and lesbian folks. Also, in that same legislative session, Dee assisted in the planning, and attended the hearings for transgender legislation dealing with document changes.

On the local level, Dee hosted two Transgender Employment Day events. She was a Director of Spectrum, a member of Q-Patrol, a member of Lesbians in Business (LiB), a volunteer with both the Houston READ Commission and Annise Parker's Campaign for City Council, co-moderator of the local Helping Cross-dressers Anonymous (HCDA) chapter, and an instructor on transgender issues for classes of the Houston Police Academy. Dee is known to many others in Houston. **Cont.page 3:**

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She worked for the League of Women Voters several years ago and was a beloved member of the Houston Writers League.

Ms. McKellar attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology and completed three years of engineering studies. She worked for Boeing in Seattle and later for contractors in the NASA - Clear Lake City area in computer flight simulation design for many of the early astronauts. She had a private pilots license and loved the skies. She was also an avid photographer. So when you look up at the clouds, smile in case she is about to snap the shutter.

Dee is survived by her proud and loving daughter, her mother and two brothers, and a very large community of friends. Anyone wishing to send cards may do so. Send a separate card to daughter (Deborah Donaldson) and to mother (Elizabeth McKellar) in card of me at 5707 Firenza, Houston 77035 and I will forward.

For more information, call Phyllis Frye at 713-723-8368.

Editor's comments continued from page 1:
So be sure and be there for the important meeting on the thirteenth at Michelle's home. Everyone's input and vote is encouraged and welcomed! Also, congratulations to Vanessa for providing a sunny day for a most successful pool party. It was a resounding success.

Now to the "meat" of what I want to talk about with the membership. We call ourselves TATS. The "S" in that acronym stands for support. Support as members of a small minority who are transcending our gender of birth, but also support as in friendship. Our common journey by its very nature fosters a common camaraderie that is uncommon in the world at large. It is nice, but also I think essential in the journey that we have elected to take. It is that Support that we, individually and collectively have to offer each other to make a very difficult journey a little bit easier.

In TATS our membership faces a myriad of difficulties and hurdles. There are the steps in transition, HRT, RLT, SRS, Life after SRS, electrolysis, therapists, on and on. Often it a society that does not understand the journey we must take, we face estrangement from friends and family, or job loss, and grief from people who just don't get it. And while we shuffle these obstacles, life keeps marching forward. With the problems mentioned above, there are the usual living problems that all people, gender gifted or not has to deal with. Sometimes it just gets to be too much for one person to handle. That is why we look to each other for the strength to take that next step and move forward. It is this support that strengthens and nourishes.

As you all know, I lost my husband on the tenth of August as a result of viral encephalitis. He had been in critical condition in the hospital since the 23rd of July. We were very close and very much in love. His death brought to an abrupt end three years four months and ten days of the most intense and caring relationship I had ever known. Skip was also part of the "S" in TATS, always encouraging me and letting me know in his own special way that I was "ok". He came to our meetings, trying to learn as much as he could about what it was I had to do, and be a part of that journey. We shared everything, and transition was no exception. Then suddenly he was ill, and then as suddenly he died. My life as I knew it had come to an end, our dreams and plans shattered . His sudden departure left a giant space, an emptiness I had never known with such intensity!

This is when you, my dear brothers and sisters, proceeded to show me what support, what TATS, is really all about. While he was in the hospital, you came to visit him, and me, offering encouragement, hugs, and open ears and hearts. And after his death you were still here, one or several of you, bringing consolation, and a physical presence that reminded me continuously that this journey is not being taken alone. I write this on August 31, yet rare indeed is the day that one of our own does not call, or come by to just say hi, and be a friend. The spray of flowers sent by the group was beautiful, and was so very much appreciated by this writer. At the Rosary and funeral, our members were out in force, standing with one of their own. THANK YOU ALL SO VERY MUCH! Thank you for being the most beautiful group of human beings it has ever been my pleasure to know.

CONT. ON PAGE 4:

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. Thank you for helping me to take those steps forward when I needed you the most. I did, and do not have the strength to go alone.

My pain is real, and it is not over. Others in the group face their own ordeals, times when it just is too much to handle alone. Just as you have supported me during this difficult time, so it is my responsibility as part of this special community, to be ready to step forward to show that same love and community that was so admirably demonstrated to me. I have learned from you actions the true meaning of the "S" in TATS. Thank you all for such a lovely lesson. I will always be grateful to every one of you. May your kindness and love be revisited upon each and every one of you many fold!

addendum:

Since I wrote this article, Dee McKellar left this life. Marie Gallagher, Michelle Myers, Sara Caffee, and I helped with immediate assistance, along with another member of Qpatrol who was up to date on CPR. . Probably the last words she heard from Marie and myself were, "We love you hon!" And we do! She was with friends and that is important. All the TATS team were both supportive and behaved absolutely appropriately in the situation, each doing there part to insure that Dee got the very best love and care while waiting for EMT. Another member of Q Patrol remarked later that he was impressed with our teamwork and cooperation when dealing with the situation at hand. He also noted the love and compassion with each other in this most difficult situation.

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FRIENDS

By Monica Katrice Roberts

Back in June I flew to Portland, Oregon to watch a TS friend graduate from college. I had 4 hours to think during that plane ride and as I looked out my window and watched the Rockies slowly pass by I began reflecting upon friendships past and present.

A friendship in some ways is like a marriage or relationship. Two people with similar interests meet, talk, spend time together, etc. The trick, however, is to keep it alive over time, without the friendship breaking up due to misunderstandings or as a result of miscommunication. Friends are vitally important to transgendered folks. A friend, whether they are male or female, gay or straight, or transgendered / non-transgendered, can help you through those rough times in life we inevitably have, be there to help celebrate those memorable occasions, and act as a constructive critic when you need a swift kick in the butt! They can also act as surrogate family members when your biological family refuses to speak to you because of your gender change.

I have been blessed to have such friends in my life, and if it were not for non-TG female friends who helped me unravel the mysteries of femininity, and other people who had my best interests and happiness at heart, I would not be the well-rounded person I am today.

It is nice to come home after a rotten day at work and listen to the answering machine messages from friends in New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles, or check my mailbox and see postcards or letters with Rayville, Louisiana or Portland, Oregon postmarks.

Just the idea that someone took the time out of their busy schedule to call or write makes one feel loved, wanted, and needed. It is a positive ego boost that is sorely needed when society's message toward transgenders is primarily negative.

One of the things I have noticed in TATS, and I am guilty of this too, is that we barely socialize with or talk to each other except on meeting days. I think its not intentional, we all have this lone wolf in us that we used to develop our TG personas, combined with the demands of surviving in the real world, that cause us not to be more social with each other. **CONT ON PAGE 5:**

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Life is short and precious, ladies and gentlemen, and so is a friend. That point got driven home when Carolyn passed away and I have regretted the fact that I did not get the chance to get to know her and potentially make a lifelong friend. I am not going to let that happen ever again!
I am going to close this with quotes from Susan L. Taylor, the editor of Essence magazine, who writes a column called In the Spirit. Here is what she has to say in one column about friendship: "We need to be our truest selves in our friendships. We need to feel the freedom to be who we are. Free to be lighthearted and silly if the mood strikes us." (Did she meet Daniell somewhere?) "Free to dance and play and jump at the sun if the spirit moves us. We need to feel free to contradict ourselves, talk about our insecurities, or not to talk at all. In being our down to earth natural selves, we build bridges that connect us. We are at our best when surrounded by happy, healthy people, people who hold a positive vision and who show by their actions that they sincerely like us. People who tell us the truth."

Amen, Ms. Taylor, Amen!

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?DO WE VALUE OUR FRIENDS

By Vanessa Edwards

How many of us value our friends? There are various types of friendships, with varying levels of closeness. The closer the friend-ship, the more value they accrue. Sometimes spouses and even relatives, by virtue of their closeness, can also be one's best friend. Do we fully acknowledge the friends we admire? Telling someone that we look up to our regard for them is often awkward without a proper situation to initiate it. Many times we avoid such comments altogether for fear of them appearing contrived.

Do we fully appreciate the intimacy of those who are the closest? Friendship is like a car in our transportation-based society: while they are there we tend to take them for granted. But once we are without them, only then do we fully realize the impact they had on our lives. How many of us truly value our friendships?

Personal circumstances have forced me to reexamine my own feelings on this subject. In a six week span from late April through the first days of June, I lost three of the four closest people in my life. At the time it occurred, I was unable to digest it completely; being interspersed between a lobbying trip to Washington, a long-planned TATS party I had hosted, the sale of my mother's house resulting in my closest sibling's sudden move to Hawaii, and the complete move of my mother's belongings from her home on short notice. The first loss was my grandma--the one person in my life who loved me unconditionally. Less than three weeks later I lost my confidant and closest transgendered friend, Carolyn Patek. Then, less than three weeks had passed before I suffered yet another loss, my very best friend Rolando Munguia. Not to minimize the other losses, but his death devastated me the most.
The loss of my grandmother was not totally unexpected--it was her second massive heart attack in six months. Even though she was family, she was also my friend. Unlike family, there were never any expectations, any feelings of disappointment, or anything short of absolute pride and love from her. She also understood what I was going through while growing up; and was the one person who would stand up to my parents for me. She knew what was going on, much better than I understood at the time, and would risk the consequences to stand up for fairness. Only later did I realize the full impact of what she did. She was also the most generous person on the planet and would give you her last dime just to make you happy. Most importantly though, she was uncon-ditional in her love. Though I never got a chance to tell her, I'm sure my transition would not have wavered her support.
Carolyn's death was a shock. It was difficult to get myself to accept it. She was there to listen when I was going through a turbulent period at a job during the early months of this year. Even though she had reservations about my taking the job, she never mentioned it for fear of raining on my parade. She let time take its course. When I called her on those nights, she knew by the tone of my voice I was hurting. Yet she took great care in not saying, "I knew it wouldn't work...! Instead she gently consoled me, and boosted my psyche...letting me know I was better than that. **CONT. PAGE 6**

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She was always there to help with my PC problems, teaching me some trick about my own computer; and spent entire weekend nights introducing me to the Internet. She was generous, not only materi-ally but with her time as well.

By far the loss of my best friend was the worst. He was non-TG, and very heterosexual; and from all appearances would be the least likely to be understanding of transgenderism. He grew up in a low-income black enclave in the shadows of the refineries. His macho Hispanic roots, his "what-the-f*ck's-your-problem" attitude, and his bouncer's physique belied the fact that he was not only accepting of my "second self", but was my most ardent and encouraging supporter! He was so supportive he proudly showed off my photos to his family, and explained my situation to them. Even more so, he did such a good job telling them, that to this day his family still considers me a son (daughter), and a brother (sister)! Regardless of how we grew to know each other previously, my new transformation meant virtually no difference to our friendship...with the exception that he now called and visited more frequently. My new persona was intriguing and exciting to him--distinctive to his own traditional life. It also inspired him to dream up ideas to utilize my new persona...a cable-access talk show, and radio DJ team were planned. His dreams in turn also inspired me to dream larger than I had before. It was also comforting to know that in a fight, he would back me up 100%. Most important, as a straight friend from my previous incarnation, he lent a level of reassurance, stability, and credibility to my transition simply by virtue of his enthusiastically genuine acceptance. He was a calming influence in my life, just by being there. Sadly, I took it for granted these--and all--friendships would be there indefinitely. However, I recognized only too late the transitory and precious quality of life.

Friends are an asset in our lives--the closer they are, the more precious and valuable. Friends contribute greatly to our lives, though much of it is sublime and likely goes unnoticed.

There are always intangibles in friendships. The strength of having some-one who encourages you, who admires you and thus aids in building your esteem. The knowledge of having someone who can give lessons by their example, who can mentor you and affect you, and inspire you to achieve at least a smidgen more than was possible before. The comfort of having someone there when you need them, someone to lend a needed item or a dollar, or a strong arm...or to lend a sympathetic ear or a shoulder for solace. The understanding of acceptance and of loyalty; and knowing that albeit unspoken, the feelings were understood...and the bond remained intact. It's paradoxical that only when we're bereft of something--or someone--do we then fully appreciate their value. How many of us indeed truly value our friends?

ELECTIONS THIS MONTH

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Election time is upon us. The elections for the annual terms for officers and board members take place on September 13, 1997 at Michelle Myers' place. For those who missed the August meeting at Michelle's, the elections will be for a one-year term, as opposed to the old two-year term of office, effective with the new term. There is quite a crop of nominees for the various office positions and board seats, as the officer and board positions have expanded. All but one of the nominees will be running unopposed with vice-president being the only race with two nominees vying for that position. The ballot positions and nominees break down as follows:

President	Michelle Myers
Vice-President (contested) ..	Daniell McCleney Stephanie Brooks
Treasurer	Arwen Schiesler
Secretary	Alexandra DeLerma
Newsletter Editor	Vanessa Edwards-Foster
Board Position 1	Monica Roberts
Board Position 2	Jessica Wicks
Board Position 3	Katrina Corday Rose

Please make a point of attending and casting your vote for the next election year.

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IN MEMORY OF:

Dee McKellar

TATS Newsletter

the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 5, Issue 10 | Houston, Texas | October, 1997

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

DEE SKENE McKELLAR 1942 - 1997

FINAL MEMORIES OF DEE ... FROM A FRIEND ....

By Sarah DePalma

Entering the doors of KPFT on the day we buried Dee was one of the strangest experiences I can recall. She had a habit of attending the GCTC meeting and then waiting for me to arrive at the station. I'd walk in the door, look to my right, and find Dee grinning from ear to ear saying, "It's about time!" Walking in the door and not finding her there caused me the worst pain of the entire day. That was the moment when I knew as a certainty, Dee was gone.

I can hardly remember a time when Lori and I didn't think of Dee as part of our little family.

Going to the beach, fireworks, or a trip to see the spring flowers? Let's call Dee and see if she wants to go. (She always came.)

Planning to rent some old videos, lounge around the house and do nothing? Let's call Dee and see if she wants to come over. (She always did.)

Twice since her passing I've caught myself saying to Lori, "Let's call Dee and see if...." Dee was part of us. Her loss hurts more than I can describe.

On Thanksgiving we could always count on Dee to bring fresh bread, sharp knives, and a talk on the proper way to carve a turkey. (Naturally she did the carving.)

Anytime we had a bar-b-que we always knew she would give us her talk on the correct way to build a fire and how to determine if the coals were ready for use. (Of course *she* did the cooking, and since it was our grill and back yard *we* did the clean up.)

At the funeral service many people spoke of her dry (I mean *really* dry) sense of humor. Once we were at a protest sponsored by It's Time, Texas! and as we looked down Capitol Avenue at ten thousand people, their flags and colors unfurled in the April sun and marching directly at us, I commented to Dee that I understood how the people at the Alamo must have felt. To which she replied, "Ten thousand queers marching on twelve even more brave queers and we hold the high ground...that's about right."

It wasn't until the *next day* I realized that since we had literally taken the "high ground," and had figuratively taken the high moral ground, her comment had more than one meaning.

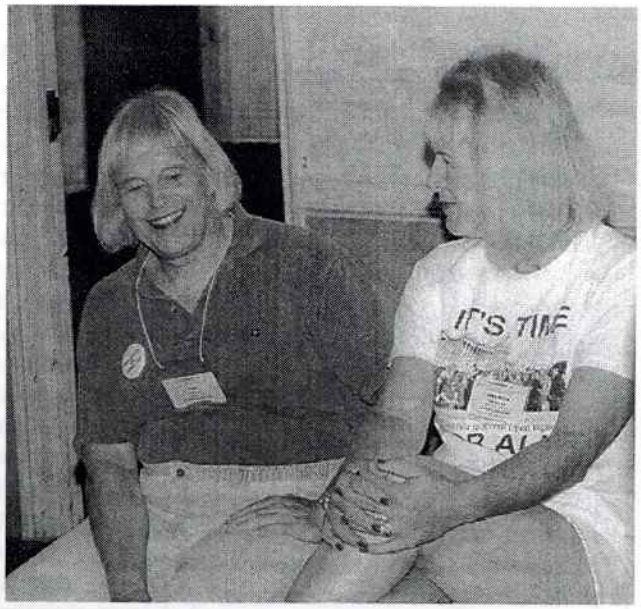
On a show she did about transgenders and the jail system, Ray Hill asked her a question about the hours she spent in jail and her response was, "It's like dealing with the Borg on Star Trek. Resistance is futile. You will be assimilated."

She also told a story on the air about someone who said, "I didn't know you used to be a guy. Can you say something in guy?" Dee's response? "So I burped."

Dee also had quite a temper if she was provoked.

We met Diane Hardy Garcia, the director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby, for lunch and heard her explanation of why transgenders were not going to be included in hate crimes legislation. After five or six minutes of this crap I looked over and saw Dee was nearly ready to explode. She slammed her fist on the table and said, "I'll tell you what Dianne. We'll build our own hate crimes bill, tell

(Continued on Page 3)



Dee McKellar (L), and Melinda Whiteway (R) take a moment to chat at the ICTLEP Law Conference.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

October 11 — Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM

October 25 — Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM

November 8 — Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM

November 22 — Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM

T. A. T. S.
P. O. Box 142
Bellaire, Texas 77401

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Hi y'all! I'm back at the helm to stay this time. As the elections are now official, I am happy to announce my assuming the TATS editorship for the next term year. My sincere desire is for this newsletter to remain appealing, vital, and to always strive for improvement over the status quo.

On a somber note, as reported in the obituary last month, local TG activist Dee McKellar passed away. Initially I'd thought of doing an article but instead decided to step aside, deferring to those closer to her. Her loss will be felt throughout the local and national TG community.

I'm not sure that this will help anyone in this time of loss, but I'll finish by simply submitting this quote from a poem entitled, "The Friar of Orders Gray."

"Our joys as wingèd dreams do fly;
Why then should sorrow last?
Since grief but aggravates thy loss,
Grieve not for what is past."

HOW TO REACH US:

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 827-5913 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our Email address is:

moonflowrr@aol.com

To contact the board members, send a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at: **http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/**

DEALING WITH CHANGE - FROM THE DAUGHTER OF A TRANSGENDER FATHER

By Debbie McKellar Donaldson

When I was growing up, there were good times and conflicts as in any other family I knew. We were living the average middle-class American life and everything seemed fine. It was not until I was nine years old that I was told about our family secret. My father was a cross-dresser and had been for all of my life. This admission shocked me, of course, but I was really too young to understand what was going on. Over the next four or five years the cross-dressing continued with my knowledge. However, our encounters at home were infrequent enough when he was 'dressed' that I was able to block out the feeling that I thought my father was a freak. Things changed, however, when I was thirteen or fourteen years old. He actually started wearing these clothes in front of me on a regular basis! It became a routine. When he came home from work he would check the mail and proceed to go change. Other than the clothes, the evenings went on as always. During my teen years, I spent a lot of time in my room to get away. I also kept very busy with school, a job, and spending time with my friends. I did anything I could to distance myself from the freak. Needless to say, there was a lot of discord in the house and animosity between us.

Things finally came to a head when I was eighteen. I found my own place and moved out. Things were tough, but there was no way that I was going back. Shortly thereafter, my parents separated and filed for divorce. In a period of approximately seven or eight months my father had effectively erased his family from his life.

Over the next two years or so, I would occasionally visit my father and share small talk to catch up. A close friend of mine likened these visits to business meetings because of our demeanor. Over time, however, I began to notice changes. His hair was getting longer and he seemed to be developing -- dare I say it -- breasts! Finally, my father put me out of my questioning misery and gave me a letter. This was his way of coming out of the closet to publicly

Dee at home with her cat, Faith.

live his life as a woman. The letter explained the steps that would follow; such as name change, changing the sex on the driver's license, and everything else that goes with becoming a new person. When I read that letter I felt as though I would fall over. This piece of paper was telling me that my father was essentially dead. After this revelation, I saw my father even less than ever. Suddenly, about three years ago, I grew up. Visits became more frequent and conversations were longer and more enlightening.

Now, I am twenty-eight years old. I am proud of who my father has become and the person that she is. She is not ashamed of her identity and does a lot of work in the community. She is also a major force in the transgender community. She is working nationally and internationally to help make things better for other people who are having trouble adjusting to their identity.

I still have problems getting my pronouns straight and on occasion I still accidentally call her Dad in public. She is patient though, and tells me that it will just take time. She tells me that she is thankful that we are talking because there are kids that sometimes turn completely away from their parents. I sometimes apace my visits apart, but I could never lose complete contact. After all, deep down inside is the person that raised me. She is my father.

Debbie Donaldson is the only child of noted transgender activist, Dee McKellar. She wrote this article just days before Dee passed away suddenly on Sept. 6, 1997.

MICHELLE'S MUSINGS - THIS IS MY DESK

By Michelle Myers

This is my first monthly article covering what it is I think of TATS, past, present and future. It will also be a way for you to understand where I think TATS should be going and, as a result , you should be able to influence that path.

I consider it an honor and an important responsibility to serve as president of TATS and I will try to do the best that I can in the upcoming year.

I have read the TATS brochure more times than almost anyone else in TATS and consider it the summary of what we are about and how we work together. It is the first thing that I go over with prospective members, I have personally made over a thousand copies of it, and I recommend that whenever we have an organizational problem we should all go back to the brochure to see what it is we say we should be doing. After rereading the brochure prior to our recent elections, I decided that during the next year I intend to concentrate my efforts in two areas: the support and educational needs of the membership and outreach to the community for our future membership. There will be other things that also will have to be done, but my personal efforts will be concentrated in these two core areas.

As far as the support and educational needs of the membership are concerned, I will need the help of the entire membership and feel I can only get that by being willing to listen to what you have to say. It is important that every member get the opportunity to have their say, but more important that we also take the time and make the effort to listen and try to understand each other's concerns. That is why I believe that our business meeting need to be open to everyone and that we use the consensus method for arriving at decisions. My function will be to act as the meeting facilitator to see that everyone has the opportunity to participate. I would also like to mention that the TATS library is now at my apartment and if anyone needs information or wants to know what is in the library, just give me a call at home at (713) 524-6349.

I also believe that we need to increase our efforts in outreach. There are a lot of things that we can all do in this regard and a lot of them are happening now. An example that comes to mind is our recent increased visibility via KPFT (90.1 FM) radio where many of our members (and particularly our VP and spokes-model Daniell) have appeared on a frequent, regular basis. Another example, that is dear to my heart since that is where I found out about TATS and met Carey, is the presence of TATS at the GCTC ULTRA meetings. I will be working with GCTC to make this a regular, joint arrangement. The TS community could be called the "fringe of the fringe". Even though we are a minority group, we have minority members within our group. They are important and could benefit from TATS. We will be increasing our efforts with the minorities and also with the FTM community.

I had a long discussion with Vanessa about the newsletter and would like to share with you some of our thoughts, particularly those that relate to what I have been discussing. The newsletter is an integral part of the support and outreach effort. It is a "window" that we look out of to the rest of the community and it is a "window" that others can look into to understand TATS. It should make us proud to give the newsletter to someone and it should leave the reader wanting to see another. It should be a quality newsletter, represent TATS and be dependable. I think we are there today! The membership has taken ownership of the newsletter over the past 6 months and that is how we got to where we are today. A great effort! Everyone still needs to participate in this effort if we are to continue with a quality newsletter and make improvements. Vanessa is the editor, but she can not do it without our help! Write an article, make comments, volunteer your time, do something every once in a while to help her!

Next month: less philosophy, more specifics!

Wishing you love and knowledge,
Michelle

Who is General Failure and why is he reading my hard disk?

FINAL MEMORIES OF DEE....

(Continued from Page 1)

everyone gays and lesbians deserve their beatings as a punishment for perversion and leave you out of our bill. Are you happy now?"

In all the time I've know her I've never seen Hardy-Garcia so speechless. It is in memory of this incident and also in memory of her victimization as a hate crime victim that It's Time, Texas! will call its hate crimes legislation the Dee McKellar bill.

Despite all her activism and all the battles we were in together, it's her smile and total belief in the word 'community' that I'll miss the most. If Lori is my right hand then Dee was my left hand. (I don't think she would approve of this analogy but I'm just returning some of her humor.) I give Dee the highest praise I can say about anyone. No matter what happened I always knew that Dee believed deeply, would fight to the finish, and would stand by her friends to the bitter end. I've lost a friend, the community has lost a valiant defender, and we have all lost someone special.

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for articles submitted:

Sarah De Palma, co-host 'After Hours' on KPFT
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Gwendolyn (OnQGwen) Smith, coord. of TCF
Annise Parker, Houston city council candidate
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Katrina C. Rose
Michelle Myers
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Martine Rothblatt, author *'The Apartheid of Sex'*
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Thoughts On The Loss Of A Friend....

By Marie Denise Gallagher

On 6 Sept 97, Houston, and the entire TG community, lost a great person. I was fortunate to have known her as a friend since 1995.

I first met Dee McKellar at the 3rd ICTLEP Law Conference. At first, I thought of her as aloof and distant. But since my "Aunt Cissy", Cissy Conley, thought of her as a friend, I did not let this bother me. Besides, I was just so happy to be able to spend a continuous period of time as ME, I wasn't too concerned about other things. This was also the conference that Cissy received the 1st TG Pioneer Award and that sort of took what little focus I had left.

My next meeting with Dee was after I moved to Houston, upon leaving the USAF. Yes, I was once a defender of this country's liberty, aka: warmonger, and after moving to Houston I vowed to put those things behind me and concentrate on my "new" life as a pre-op TS. Houston was chosen as the site for this "transformation" more because of where my new employer was then any other reason, although having an active TG community was no small consideration either.

The first group meeting I went to was with the Gulf Coast Transgender Community (GCTC). I am still a member of this group and plan to always remain one, as I have maintained my association with the New Orleans, Gulf Gender Alliance (GGA). But Dee was not attending the GCTC meetings at that time, and since I had made that contact at the Law Conference, I really wanted to make contact again. I found out from Jackie Thorne that Dee was attending the local Helping CrossDressers Anonymous (HCDA) meetings, and this is where we met again.

As I came into the meeting, the first person I saw was Dee, and when I said, "hi," she got that small little smile I've seen her have so many times since, that I've learned means, "I know you". We sat and talked and spent most of that meeting just talking about what I was planning and what things I should be aware of in the local area.

I spent the next few months showing up at the weekly meetings whenever I could get away from work. I'm a computer consultant, so my schedule can be a bit crazy at times. Shortly thereafter, Dee began working for ICTLEP on a permanent basis, I believe that this was just after she had some problems with some thugs at her apartment. In any case, I began to get to know her better, through our mutual interest in ICTLEP. By the end of '96, when it became obvious that I had to transition, Dee was there to help me plan how to do it, discuss options on what may or may not work and what to do to help make things work. But mostly she was there just to chat when I needed it.

The way in which I told my employers about my Transsexualism, was hammered out in the ICTLEP house over many nights of gabbing in her living room. But that wasn't all we talked about. We talked about the TG community in general. Her position in ICTLEP made her a valuable conduit of information about what was happening. I found out just how involved this unassuming woman was in Human Rights, not just TG rights.

We talked about my previous service in the USAF and why I shouldn't ever be ashamed of who I was and what I had done. This is one of the reasons that my USAF awards still hang on the walls in my home office area, even though they have the 'wrong' name on them. We also talked about her old jobs working with USAF 'Occifers' and 'Sillyvilians'. We had much to talk about as we had both run into the same 'dead from the neck up' kind of people in our careers and had not let that stop us from excelling.

I firmly believe that without Dee's support, my transition would not be going as smoothly as it is. Yes, I am a competent and intelligent person, but I'm also fallible as are all humans, and being able to talk out what I was going to do and what I might expect to happen, allowed me to do what was best for both me and my employer. This attitude, to find a win-win solution, has been commented on by my bosses as one of the reasons they are so happy with me. Dee provided the "wall" for me to bounce all of these ideas off. That wall is no longer there.

Dee had gone through some rough times of late. Her friends were very worried about her, and both Katrina Rose and myself took to calling her, checking for her online, and if needed, wandering by her place, to make sure she was OK. She was just beginning to turn things around and find happiness again when we lost her. I am very sad for the loss of one of the best friends that I have ever had, but I am also happy that she can now look after all of us and not just those of within her (electronic) arms reach. Goodbye my friend, you will never be forgotten.

Peace and hope be with you all.

Remembering Dee

By Gwendolyn Ann Smith

Here in California, the color of the trees, the stillness of the night, and the slight chill to the breeze tell me that autumn is fast approaching.

And whenever the feeling of autumn approaches, I think of a dear friend of mine who died this time of year, three short years ago. That invariably leads to me thinking of others I have known who have passed into my life, and have since moved on. Gloria and Angela, Mandie, Kelly, and Connie, and even Skip, who I only met last July in Houston.

The seasons turn, and we remember the loss of another great transgender individual from the fold: Dee McKellar.

I met Dee initially through the electronic medium, first encountering her name on the myriad of ICTLEP-related e-mails that I receive. After time, we took to some small correspondence, and she began to attend the Sunday Gender Conference very regularly, always adding that point that made even the most cynical think in a new way. Seeing her name show up on Sunday became a joy for me, as it told me that it wasn't going to just be another chat night: something worthwhile was going on.

In late June, Dee took to 'hounding' me in an attempt to get me to attend the 1997 Transgender Law Conference. Her dogged attempts worked, and I found myself in Texas. We got few moments during the conference to talk, but did manage to get a good deal of time the evening after the conference and into the next day. I will cherish those moments, and the discussions her and I shared.

Somewhere in that mythical part of cyberspace called the Gazebo, I know that another tree fills the grove, a remembering of another poineer lost, one not quickly forgotten.

Gender Luck and Gender Evolution," to you, Dee. I'm gonna miss you.

MEMORIES OF DEE AND THE POLICE ADADEMY

By Annise Parker

I met Dee McKellar about the time she got involved with ICTLEP. I got to spend a good bit of time with her over the past few years.

I have been a community activist here in Houston for about 20 years -- in fact, I first met Phyllis Frye about that long ago. In that time I have been supportive of, and been supported by, the transgender community. Transgender volunteers have been a key element of my political campaigns, and Dee was one of the most dedicated.

About five years ago I started teaching classes at the Houston Police Department cadet academy. One class is a 3 hour segment, presented to each cadet class, on the gay/lesbian/transgender communities of Houston. The first hour is demographics, facts and figures. The second hour is on specific policing issues, with about 20 minutes of a video and discussion on gay bashing. And the last hour is a wrap up of dangling issues and an open question and answer session. I believe in presenting some of the diversity of our communities, and so use a panel format to give a variety of viewpoints, although the class is very focused on specific policing concerns. I would always discuss trangender issues myself.

One day the lightbulb finally went on in my head and I decided that transgenders should speak for themselves. The academy was not thrilled with the idea, to say the least. Nor was the non-gay police sergeant, Mark Marsolais, who is part of my panel. I guess they envisioned an ultra-liberal, six-foot tall drag queen in 5 inch heels and a feather boa! Instead, they got Dee.

I thought a lot about who might be an appropriate lecturer. That person had to be self-confident, articulate, dependable, and knowledgeable on trangender issues. I briefly considered my old friend Phyllis, knowing she's spoken to lots of classes over the years. But, no. The person also had to have no attitude about the police department or police officers in general, and the ability to smilingly answer stupid questions and totally ignore insensitive comments. Dee proved to be a good choice.

We did have to iron out some wrinkles after the first class, however. The first problem we encountered was that Dee was a complete ham! She loved being the center of attention of 75 or so people. She didn't want to stop talking! I explained later that I was giving her 20 minutes of time and that meant she had to hone her remarks to fit that amount of time. (Sarah DePalma has said that when she and Dee first met they spent

15 minutes sitting side by side not talking. I find this totally unbelievable, about both of them.)

The other issue was that among such topics as Dee's personal transformation, "his and her" ID cards and which jail a transgender prisoner should be transported to, the cadets have always been allowed to ask panelists personal questions. In fact, that is an important part of the third hour of class. Dee had answered some and not others, and was somewhat defensive about her surgical status and sexual orientation. I explained that the cadets needed information. She was there to increase their comfort level, not her own. She was perfectly free to not answer any inappropriate questions, but it had to be from a position of being completely comfortable where she was. Dee got the message.

Finally, instructors must insure that advice we give to cadets is in line with department policy. Their rules say that, except in an emergency, men are searched by male officers and women by female officers. Dee regularly misstated the suggested language on how to determine this by saying officers should ask prisoners "who they would prefer to be searched by", rather than "who is appropriate to search them". Over time, Dee and Sergeant Marsolais (whose wife's maiden name was McKellar -- a fact Dee rubbed in at every opportunity) developed a good give and take as he would correct her.

I trust that Dee genuinely enjoyed her time in class. I believe she has made a difference in the way transgendered men and women are treated by the police. I know that she has made our world a better, safer place by her efforts.

I DON'T LIKE RE-RUNS

(An Overly-Long Epistle On Di, Dee And Departure)

by Katrina C. Rose

Dee McKellar was one of my closest friends in the Transgender community. Princess Diana was not. However, they died rather close together on the grand timeline, so my thoughts concerning the chunk o' time describable as 'Labor Day Weekend 1997 and the two weeks thereafter' involve both of them. If you start to nod off - please don't. Go grab some caffeine and trudge onward. If you are transgendered or care about someone who is, Dee McKellar is worthy of your interest - even at the expense of the time it will take to trudge through my verbosity.

Saturday night - Labor Day weekend.

I'd spent the day attempting to clean up my living room. As anyone who has seen it will acknowledge - this was a hopeless from the start, but I gave it a go anyway. And, of course, I'd all but given up by 10:30 or so - I was online. Just as I finally decided to call it a night, I noticed a news bulletin saying that Princess Diana had been in a car wreck in Paris. Just another news story. No big deal.

At 4:30 a.m. my cat informed me that I should dispense with this thing called sleep and should get up and play with her. As usual, she was rather insistent. And, as usual, she won the argument. I got up. Instead of doing anything about the living room, I hopped back online. The first thing that I noticed was the AOL newsblurb: Princess Di was dead.

*** on soapbox ***

Please understand this - I make no apologies: I have an intense dislike for royalty. My journey to England last summer, on which I saw up close the class division of royals vs. non-royals, only fueled this opinion. I see absolutely NO reason for such an institution in this era. Now, I don't care if folx call themselves Duke, Duchess, or whatever. That's just a relic of the past and, if you subscribe to it, its a bad reflection upon you. Ultimately, it doesn't really hurt anyone. However, a government pouring an almost endless stream of money into the hands of a bunch of pompous, inbred morons while there is even one homeless person under the jurisdiction of that government offends me beyond belief.

Princess Diana was different though. She actually tried to do something with the privileged position that she married into. I believe that, ultimately, that is why she was treated as badly as she was by the rest of the castle bunch - - she was making them look bad.

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I DON'T LIKE RE-RUNS

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*** Off soapbox ***

Saturday night - the next weekend. Same Kat-time, same Kat-channel.

I had taped the CBS coverage of Di's funeral. I would have just watched it live, but I had gone out on Q-Patrol on Friday night. (I'll explain this here as it is relevant in following paragraphs: Q-Patrol is a neighborhood watch group in the Montrose area of Houston, Texas. The group grew out of an effort by Queer Nation to patrol the streets of the neighborhood following a vicious gay-bashing murder several years ago that was perpetrated by yuppie teenagers from a particular Houston suburb.) On Fridays the patrol goes from 11 to 2 - so I got back home REALLY late and was in no mood for a funeral at that time of morning.

Consequently, I didn't see Elton John's song until later when I watched the tape. It was quite moving. I then fast-forwarded the tape to almost the end. I wanted to tape both of Jewel's performances that were going to be on the re-run of Saturday Night Live that evening (okay - this was a re-run that I was going to like.) However, inadvertently, I saw a re-run that really destroyed my mood that evening. I hit stop at an arbitrary point near the end of the tape. Then I hit 'play' just to see what was on the tape at that point. CBS's coverage was still going on - but in a split- screen format: the top left had a re-run of Di's funeral and the bottom right was showing the hearse going down the freeway (okay - motorway - just to be proper) to her final resting place. Well, the re-run at this point was showing the Elton John performance. The juxtaposition of his song and seeing the hearse going down the road caused me to totally lose it.

After a few minutes, I regained my composure.

Fast-forward a few minutes - on toward midnight.

I got an IM from JessicaW3 telling me that I needed to get in touch with MarieDeniG immediately. Despite my insistence, Jess wouldn't elaborate on what was up. Still, I obliged - but was unable to connect with Marie (she wasn't home - yet, as I would find out.) I was becoming distraught. I was afraid that something had happened to Marie and/or her spouse. However, I finally found Jess via phone and she gave me the bad news.

Dee McKellar was dead. She was preparing to go out on Q-Patrol on Saturday night, but before the patrol ever got started she collapsed and died. Devastated would not have adequately described how I felt. I'm not sure that any word really would. Earlier, I referred to Dee as a friend. That is certainly true. But, she was more.

*** Back on the soapbox ***

I don't have much use for the phrase 'family values.' I often say that I don't have a 'family'; instead, I have 'relatives.' Believe me, the two are bowel-shatteringly different concepts. Few, if any, of the people who happen to be genetically linked to me have any use for me - and this was true prior to my beginning to deal with my Transgender issues (and, to be fair, that isn't just a slam directed at the religionists among them; I have some relatives who I'm sure do not fall into that category although, through no fault of either myself or themselves, I either have never met or have simply never gotten to know and probably never will.) Those people are NOT my family. The people who I care about and who care about me are my family.

*** Off of the soapbox again ***

Dee McKellar was family in the first degree.

Dee was activist to the core and made no apologies for it. Yes, this occasionally would unnerve some people to some extent. In fact, once upon a time I was one of those people. I first encountered Dee online in the Gazebo in the Sunday Gender Chat in early 1996. I'd heard folx refer to her as being from Houston, so when I 'saw' her I IM'd her. Her response: "Not now - I'm conferencing" - or something like that. I saw her in the flesh a few weeks later at the Texas T Party in Dallas. I passed her in the hallway and she looked, um..... intense - in activist mode again I'm sure.

Meek TG2B that I was at the time, I was severely frightened at the prospect of getting involved with the activist folx. I even entertained thoughts of trying to do a stealth transition without the aid of any of the activists from Houston or anywhere else - I was going to simply slip out of town as the old me and set up shop somewhere far away as the real me. By the summer of 1996 I'd begun sending out e-mail feelers about trying to do this. Well, one got bounced into the in-basket of Phyllis Frye. She encouraged me, in her special way, (1) not to try what I was contemplating, and (2) to come to a Labor Day Bar B Q at the ICTLEP offices - and that I should contact Dee McKellar for directions.

And so I did.

I had heard of ICTLEP but assumed that anything even remotely related to the gay community HAD to be down in the Montrose area. Much to my amazement, the ICTLEP offices were not only out on my general end of town, but they were almost in my actual neighborhood. And, much to my amazement, Dee McKellar - this activist-type-person - was beyond friendly. She, Phyllis, and the rest of the folx I met at this get-together did encourage me to come out but understood why I was not out and was planning not to come out until I get out of law school.

It was a wonderful afternoon.

About a month later I got an e-mail from Dee asking if I as interested in going to a fundraiser Bar B Q for Congressman Gene Green. Phyllis had a pair of tickets but couldn't go but wanted a TG presence. Dee wanted to go but had no transportation. I was eager to go snarf Bar B Q but I was two steps beyond terrified at the thought of going to something SO public. Still, I said I'd go. As we were leaving the ICTLEP office to go, I was so worried about how my makeup looked that I was making Dee nervous (after all, she was the passenger and I was driving.) But, she was genuinely concerned about me. She said if I needed to talk about this to go ahead and pull off the road and that we could talk. I confessed my fear: I was afraid of being recognized. This was a Democratic fundraiser and there would DEFINITELY be people there who knew the male me. Dee said that would be impossible: I looked totally different as the real me. That was the first time that anyone really emphasized that to me. Yeah, some folx had said I looked nice but I just assumed that I looked like 'the old me' in makeup and a dress (deep down, I assumed that folx who were complimenting me were either exaggerating or flat-out lying.) Dee also said not to worry about my makeup not being perfect - no one would care. Well, thanks to her reassurance and handholding, I not only made it through the Bar B Q but got to meet Rep. Green (I also got to see the man who wrote 'The Orange Blossom Special' do the Macarena - but that's a story better suited for the next revival of 'The Twilight Zone.') As I told the crowd at Dee's funeral - six months prior to that Bar B Q, had anyone told me that I would, after only a few months as being the real me, be shaking hands with a U.S. Congressman - as the real me - I'd have laughed such prognosticators out of the room.

But, it happened. And I have Dee to thank. I still have bouts of non-confidence about various things - primarily my voice - but nothing like I had prior to that breakthrough event. In December I accompanied Dee to an Xmas party at Suzanne Anderson's. In February, I took a roadtrip to New Orleans and Biloxi, MS with my dear friend Marie - who I also met for the first time at that ICTLEP Bar B Q on Labor Day 1996. Ultimately, I marched in the 1997 Houston 'Glowing With Pride' parade - one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life.

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In Memoriam: Some Final Thoughts On Dee McKellar

"Dee was a champion and a sweetheart; she worked hard, and she cared. I'm glad I knew her, even slightly, and glad that she was part of our movement, our community. I will miss her smile, her humor, and her intellect. Loss is always difficult to bear. Thank you, Dee, for sharing yourself with us."

James Green, head of FTM International, and ICTLEP board member

"Dee, you were there when I first started trying to come out of my closet. You were there when I saw you at the Town Meeting, and at the Book signing by Kate Bornstien[sic]. You showed me it was okay to be transsexual and out. You were there at nearly every gender related event I went to, smiling and encouraging. You were there to let me know I was okay. You were there at the Pride Parade each year, organizing and celebrating our lives. You were there at this last parade when my husband and I got to lead the transgender group, proclaiming out loud our community and our pride. You were there at the law conference, working without a break ensuring everything worked the way it should. It did. You were there on Q-Patrol, quietly enjoying the company, and serving our neighborhood. You and I were talking and laughing the night it came time for you to leave us. You never asked for anything. We were there to tell you that we love you. We love you Dee McKellar! This is our gift to you."

Jessica Wicks, member TATS & GCTC

"I know that I would not be with my best friend and the love of my life if Dee McKeller[sic] had not have been their[sic] for us. We love her and will miss her very deeply. I know that she is in Heaven and I know she still has that wonderful smile."

Julie Jordan, member GCTC & HCDA

"Dee helped us save our marriage and for that I say thank you Dee for giving me the love of my life back and helping us to blend in this wonderful aspect of our lives.
I will always be thankful for your life.
I love you"

Stephanie Jordan, spouse of Julie Jordan of GCTC & HCDA

"...We had more of a problem with her being Republican than we did with her being Transsexual!"

Robert McKellar, Dee's brother

"Dee was a wonderful person. She exemplified the saying that there is no limit what a person can accomplish if they don't bother claiming credit for it. I always will remember her beautiful ICTLEP wood carving, which is like ICTLEP's taber-nacle. I also remember her report from the ILGA meeting in Helsinki Finland. And her pride in being Phyllis' Seargent-at-Arms. We didn't know each other hardly at all, but I will miss you Dee McKellar."

Martine Rothblatt, author of 'The Apartheid of Sex', noted MTF lecturer & activist.

"While I had known of Dee McKellar for about four years, mostly via our paths crossing as we each pursued our various activities within the L/G/T/B community, this July was the first opportunity I had to work directly with her. She was a dedicated and hardworking volunteer--a real asset to the campaign. We were becoming friends and I am so sorry to have lost her. Even in her death, she was able to bring community together. We are all lucky to have had her as part of our lives. Those familiar with "The Low Road" from *The Moon is Always Female* by Marge Piercy will understand when I say: We all have one less."

Deborah Bell, Field Director, Annise Parker for Houston City Council Campaign

"Dee...was not a celebrity. But her impact on our community was almost as great. The night she died, Dee was on her way to render service to the community by participating in the Q-Patrol. Dee was a very private person; hard to get to know as she did not talk about her personal problems or involvement. But Dee was a member of a substantial number of diverse groups; not just a member, but actively participating. A very wise 'drag queen' friend of mine had a personal philosophy that I have taken for my own.... 'It is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice...."

Jackie Thorne, member GCTC & candidate for empress, RS Imperial Court of the Single Star.

"On behalf of all of us here at NGLTF, I wanted to extend our deepest sympathies to all of those that knew and loved Dee McKellar. We considered Dee as a trusted friend and ally and an important member of our community.
As you know, I last saw Dee at the ICTLEP conference this summer. When I arrived on the scene, she said, "I have to talk with you right now!" No how are you, no drink of water, only getting directly to the point. Dee knew that NGLTF had recently made two new programmatic hires and wanted to be sure that both of my new colleagues, shared our common committment[sic] to building a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement. Once she had the commitment and was reassured, then there was time for visiting and greeting."
Dee worked hard, and at least publicly, was always fearless in advancing a social change agenda. NGLTF mourns a tireless advocate and I'll miss a valued colleague."

Kerrl Lobel, Executive Director, NGLTF

"As I rode my bicycle back to Annise's campaign office after Dee's funeral, I realized how she has given me strength to stand up a little taller. I am challenged by mental illness in the form of depression, and for many years viewed myself as a 'bad, dirty thing'...not even a person. In the two years that I have known Dee she has shown me that it is okay to be who you are, even if people around you try to put you down. You are the one who is responsible for your own sense of self worth, and once you start to get it, it only continues to grow and get stronger. It is through Dee's sense of self worth that she gave strength to me. I will never forget Dee and I will always strive to help all people improve their own personal image. Dee, thank you so much for being a part of my positive life."

Patrick McElvane, Volunteer Coordinator, Annise Parker for City Council Campaign

> The grave...is but a covered bridge
> Leading from light to light, through a brief darkness.
> *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

I DON'T LIKE RE-RUNS

(Continued from Page 6)

These may seem like little things, but to someone who was a homebody as a male and even more so as my real self they were major accomplishments.

The last month or so of Dee's life was a bit strained not just for her but for those who interacted with her frequently. What happened regarding her position with ICTLEP and the underlying cause of it is not all that important. Shit happened - as it does in everyone's life. However, in this case both persons involved were people who everyone in the TG community cared about.

During that month I was worried about Dee. When I would bump into her online she really didn't 'sound' like herself. I wasn't the only one worried about her. I took to making note of each time I'd see her online, regardless of whether I actually had an IM conversation with her - and passing such 'sightings' along to Marie and Vanessa just to let them know that she was doing okay enough to be online.

After a few weeks, things seemed to begin to turn around for her - she apparently had a job lined up and she was getting into volunteer gear with the Annise Parker for City Council Campaign. I was extremely happy to hear that she had found a place to live. I had volunteered to help with the move but, due to a cold that I had in late August, I wasn't actually able to help. She called me on the Friday before Labor Day to see if I could help. When I told her about the cold, she understood. But, instead of getting all down-in-the-dumpsy, as she had been apt to do of late, she immediately turned to other things: she asked me what I was taking in law school this semester and we bantered about that for a few minutes. That was more like the Dee I'd known for the majority of the past year. And I'm glad - because that was the last phone conversation that I had with her.

I did have a cyber-conversation with her after that, and it ended on a somewhat bizarre note. No - nothing bad, just bizarre (for Dee, anyway.) It was a very brief "Hi. How ya be doin'?" IM. But, after I went off to other stuff, she had sent one more line: she was expressing surprise at the impending purchase of the Los Angeles Dodgers by Rupert Murdoch. This might not be bizarre for most folx, but I didn't expect Dee to give a flip about it. Dee didn't devote much time to sports. In fact, just after I met her, ICTLEP had a "mail-out" session (envelope-stuffing, etc.). This occurred over several evenings, one of which was a Monday night - DURING football season. She said that she would make arrangements for Monday Night Football to be 'available' if that's what it would take for folx to show up and work. Sports was NOT on her list of priorities. In the days following her death I was introduced to some aspects of Dee's life that I hadn't known about. I don't think she deliberately covered this up - she was just always so busy with her numerous group activities that she didn't have time to show off her accomplishments from years past. Dee was a heckuva photographer. I was amazed when I started looking at the of slides that were in her apartment. I could not handle the thought of these wonderful pieces of art being lost forever. Dee's wonderful daughter Debbie has entrusted custody of a ton of these photos to me for the time being. My goal is to see a book of Dee's photos published. Perhaps, one of these daze - after I get my law degree and re-enter the world of the employed - I can accomplish this. But, I hope it can happen before then. Dee did a lot for a lot of folx. This is something that folx can do for her. Stay tuned - there will be updates on this. I doubt that the activist Dee will ever be forgotten - but I don't want the non-activist Dee to be forgotten either.

Dee was a wonderful human being.
Dee was my friend.
Dee was family.
I love you, Dee. I'm gonna miss you.

TATS ELECTS OFFICIALS

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

The TATS (Texas Association for Transsexual Support) elections were held at the September 13, 1997 meeting. As most seats were uncontested there were few, if any, surprises. The one seat which was contested -- the race for vice-president -- was conceded to Daniell McCleney by Stephanie Brooks. The only other issue of note in the election was approving of a term reduction from the current two years to one year. The term issue unanimously passed. The elected officers for the 1997-1998 term are: President, Michelle Myers; Vice-President, Daniell Christian McCleney; Treasurer, Arwen Schiesler; Secretary, Alexandra DeLerma; and Newsletter Editor, Vanessa Edwards-Foster. The board members elected for the upcoming term are: Monica Roberts, Katrina C. Rose, and Jessica Wicks.

The Microsoft Slogan

Apparently Microsoft made a minor mistake in translating its "where do you want to go today?" marketing slogan into Japanese.

Rougly translated back into English, it became: "If you don't know where you want to go, we'll make sure you get taken."

PCOS A Threat To FTM Population

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster
(excerpted from article by James Green)

According to gynecologist Sheila Kirk, M.D., one to five percent of genetically born females are afflicted with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS). Reported in an article to *FTM newsletter* (issue #38) by James Green, the situation is of particular concern to the FTM population. An estimated 25% of FTM individuals have or will will develop PCOS[1].

PCOS is characterized by a rise in the androgen levels released by the adrenal glands. It's noted that 70% of the cases register increased levels of dehydroepiandrosterone, and in 50% of the cases 11 beta hydroxy androstenedione is elevated. Alone, these increased androgen levels can lead to hypertension and a higher risk of heart disease. However, with prescribed testosterone for those in RLT, the aforementioned risks increase, along with increased risks of ovarian, uterine and breast cancers. Symptoms of PCOS include obesity, and irregular, prolonged, or heavy menses, and some masculinization (voice pitch changes, balding, facial hair growth, altered hair growth on the body trunk, genitalia and extremities, and distinct clitoral growth); however, many people show no obvious symptoms at all.

At the recommendation of Dr. Kirk, all FTM individuals should have thorough pelvic and/or transvaginal ultrasound tests of the ovaries, and a blood test to monitor the level of the androgens mentioned earlier. It was further advised that all transitioning FTM persons consider removing the uterus and ovaries, even if surgical reassignment is not planned, to reduce the risk of contracting the disease. In non-transitioned individuals (those not on testosterone therapy), once PCOS is diagnosed, it is possible to treat it with estrogen.

Oftentimes many FTMs are reluctant to seek treatment. For those individuals who have successfully transitioned, the discovery of a trip to the hospital to remedy a 'female' condition by friends, employers, or their insurance who were previously unaware of their former identity is looked upon aversely. Ironically FTM individuals whose doctors are aware of their previous status have difficulty receiving needed treatment. Many of these physicians are reluctant to perform hysterectomies on them, presuming they might change their mind about having children. Other physicians will view the procedure as aiding the masculinization process.

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[1] *FTM Newsletter #36, March 1997, pg. 5*