

Transgender Visibility

A Firsthand Look Into the Local TV and TG Communities

by Amanda Starr
Contributing Writer

Ladies and gentlemen, HI! HI!
HI! I'm Amanda Starr. I'm a TV (transvestite), which is a transgendered individual who chooses to possess a female wardrobe and wears it in public/private while also retaining a male wardrobe and wears it in public (and in some cases vice versa).

Fully clothed or scantily clad, we come in all shapes, sizes, sexual preferences, geographical locations, cultures, in the closet or out in public, full-time or once in a while: these differences are vast.

The thing we all have in common is our desire/passion to dress in female attire and emulate the female in our mannerisms and actions to some degree or another.

I am going to be contributing articles, information, news, and commentary about the transgender community, from near and afar:

- Events such as the California Dreaming convention held at the Burbank Holiday Inn last March (next year's California Dreaming will be in San Francisco, our backyard).
- Places to meet and socialize with other transgender individuals on both a small and large scale (Ever been to a place where there are 50+ ladies in one location? The atmosphere is electric). I'll also feature comments, locations of clubs, parties like Marlayna Lacie's dance parties at the Queen Mary Show Lounge in Studio City, California.
- Meetings and conferences, like the conferences last February sponsored by the medical professionals trying to understand why we are.
- Political & legal issues facing our community, (gender laws, such as Santa Cruz & San Francisco have passed to protect our rights).
- Stories and experiences I have had in my travels that will enlighten and entertain everyone—the list goes on and on.

What ever information I obtain, I'll pass this on to you ladies so you can broaden your horizons, meet new friends, come out of the closet, or just make peace with yourselves by realizing you/we are not all alone, most of all we're OK and



Amanda Starr en femme in Monterey.

not be ashamed of ourselves and our actions. Hopefully putting the knob of the closet door in your hands, turning it, opening the door and venturing out.

Anybody who has stepped out that door knows exactly what I'm

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talking about. It's easy for some and really hard for others. I can say to you ladies go ahead get out and enjoy your feminine side, because once you get out and your fears diminish you may wish you'd done it a long time ago.

I met a lady in her late 50's, early 60's from San Francisco at the Queen Mary Lounge. It was her first time out. She waited that many years and had to go all the way to Los Angeles to do something she'd been wanting to do all her life. She was having a wonderful time.

My first time out I think I was 16 or 17 years old. When I started studying at the California College of Arts & Crafts in the Bay Area (early 70's) I was out the door *en femme* and enjoying life to its fullest. Because of my ability to cope with the times, situations, and adventures, with my experiences, I learned to adapt.

I was 19; now I'm 42. I'm promoting my artwork as Amanda Starr, writing this column to all of you, and just loving life, but it all starts by opening the door and stepping out. Once you're out, the rest is easy.

I spent February and March in the North Hollywood and Studio City area *en femme*. You would all be surprised that the majority of the people that I encountered were very accepting of my feminine side. The places I stayed, the stores where I shopped, the restaurants I ate in. People really did not seem to be bothered by a TV and treated me with the utmost courtesy and respect.

I would go afternoon shopping, parking in an attended lot several times, and conversing with the attendant each time. He paid me a very unexpected compliment, saying I looked very elegant (that was a very important boost to my ego) and told me that my lifestyle is OK. This was a middle-aged Latino man, and coming from someone like that is really positive reinforcement and a confidence builder.

I was staying with a very dear friend Tasha La Blush and I went shopping at a Longs Drugs for nylons and a few other feminine necessities that I ran out of, in all places Irvine. That's Orange County mind you, the home of Nixon, and the birthplace of the John Birch Society. I did not feel the least bit intimidated or the least bit of hostility. If I had, it would have been their problem anyway, not mine.

These are a few of the examples of my experiences. Here's something a little closer to home.

A few weeks ago I went to Wilson's Leather in the Northridge Mall to shop. The lady was very accommodating, letting me try on what I was buying to get the correct size. When I was at the counter finishing my transaction, she told me that her sister (brother) was in Los Angeles living life as a woman and showed me a picture of her. You never know when, where, or what but life will surprise you when you least expect it, and in the least expected places.

The bottom line is don't fight it do it. Let your feminine side go and enjoy life from both sides, feminine and masculine. We are very special people: we have the ability to see the world from two perspectives.

The editors would like to welcome Amanda Starr, our first contributing writer from south county.