

Upcoming Events

October 13

Reception with the Transgender Law Center, San Francisco, CA

October 14-15

Trainings at Princeton University led by Caeden Dempsey, NCTE Field Director

October 17-24

Fantasia Fair 2004 - Trans event held annually in Provincetown, MA, for more information, visit <http://fantasiafair.org>

October 26

Intersex Awareness Day - See article in adjoining column

November 2

Election Day Educate yourself on the issues and cast your vote!

November 10-14

Creating Change Conference in St. Louis Hosted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. For more information, visit www.thetaskforce.org/ourprojects/cc

November 20

Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance See article in adjoining column

Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 20 marks the sixth year the Transgender Day of Remembrance will be observed throughout the US and around the world. The Day of Remembrance began in San Francisco in November 1999 to honor the life of Rita Hester, who was murdered the previous November, and the lives of other victims of anti-trans violence, who all too often go unnoticed by the rest of our society. Besides bringing awareness to anti-trans violence to others, this day is set aside to mourn as a community those who have been victimized throughout the past year. Traditionally, candlelight vigils are held and the names of our fallen brothers and sisters are read aloud by those gathered.

We urge trans allies to participate in Day of Remembrance memorials alongside the transgender community. According to Gwendolyn Smith, creator of the Day of Remembrance website, "Anti-transgender violence and murder does not affect only transgender people. It affects our loved ones, our friends, and our families. Not only can a transgender person be a target, but anyone who supports us faces the threat of violence simply for standing with their transgender friends and family. Because of that, Day of Remembrance is important for not only transgender people, but all those who call themselves allies."

To find out if a vigil is being held in your city, visit www.gender.org/remember/day.

For more information on Day of Remembrance or victims of anti-trans violence, visit www.rememberingourdead.org.

Intersex Awareness Day

The first Intersex Awareness Day is being organized for October 26, 2004 and marks the 8th anniversary of the first public intersex demonstration that took place on October 26, 1993 in Boston, MA.

Intersex Awareness Day is the international day of grassroots action to end shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital cosmetic surgeries on intersex children. Intersex Awareness Day is a way for allies worldwide to call attention to the issues faced by intersex people in their own community. Sponsors of the day include Bodies Like Ours and the Intersex Initiative as well as the GLBT Resource Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Boulder County Public Health, Queer Bodies, the GLBT Student Services at Ohio State University, Working It Out (Australia), and Organisation Internationale des Intersexués (Québec)

Intersex is commonly defined as "a series of medical conditions in which a child's genetic sex (chromosomes) and phenotypic sex (genital appearance) do not match, or are somehow different from the 'standard' male or female." Currently, it is believed that about one in 2,000 babies are born visibly intersexed. Surgical reconstruction to alter these bodies to make them appear more "normal" is a common medical response, although these procedures have come into question. Adults who underwent these "treatments" are speaking out about the physical and emotional harm these surgeries cause.

To get involved in Intersex Awareness day go to www.intersex-awareness-day.org. To find out more about intersex issues go to www.bodieslikeours.org or www.intersexinitiative.org.

Hate Crime Legislation Dies in Committee

The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act (LLEEA) has died in conference committee. In June, the Senate passed LLEEA as an amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill. The bill then went to conference committee which is a joint House and Senate committee that works to eliminate differences between the House and Senate versions of the same bill. In the case of the hate crimes bill, the Senate included the hate crime amendment and the House did not. The conference committee decided the hate crime language would not stay in the Defense Authorization Bill which means the bill is dead for the year.

NCTE has already begun conversations to improve the language of the bill so that trans people are more explicitly protected in it next year.

LGBT Student of Color National Summit

The U.S. Student Association (USSA) Foundation presents the LGBT Student of Color National Summit hosted at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio January 15-17, 2005.

If you are an LGBT student of color and an up-and-coming or current campus leader, then this cutting-edge National Summit is for you. The summit will draw 30 to 50 college students from across the country and will focus on capacity building and organizing LGBT students of color locally while also providing opportunities for resource sharing nationally.

This summit is for lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, transgender, intersex, queer, same gender loving, and questioning college students of color (including but not limited to Asian and Pacific Islander, Black, Latina/o, Middle Eastern, and Native students of color). USSA encourages applications from students of color with disabilities, women, genderqueer, and transgender students of color.

Contact Nicholas Sakurai at 202.347.8772 or lgbt@usstudents.org to apply.

Transgender Political Candidates

2004 marks a great year for trans people in the political arena. In addition to the coordinated participation of five openly trans delegates to the Democratic National Convention, there has also been an increase in openly trans people running for political office. Amanda Simpson of Arizona and Robert Haaland of California are two of those candidates. (see <http://www.nctequality.org/July04Newsletter.pdf> for NCTE's story on the DNC delegation)

Amanda Simpson, head of advanced and special programs at Raytheon, is running for the Arizona House of Representatives. Simpson became the first openly trans candidate nominated for state office by a major political party on September 7th when she won the Democratic primary. Simpson joins three additional candidates in the race for two seats in District 26, two of these candidates being incumbent Republicans. Simpson's platform includes affordable healthcare, managing AZ's population growth, and improving education.

Robert Haaland is running for District 5 Supervisor for San Francisco. Haaland has been active in the community for a number of years as a tenant-rights activist, an organizer with the Service Employees International Union and president of one of San Francisco's democratic clubs. Haaland's platform covers a wide range of social issues including making the San Francisco police department more effective and accountable, moving the city towards renewable energy sources, and giving the public greater access to information regarding governmental policy decisions.

At this time, as far as NCTE knows, there are only two openly trans elected government officials in the country. Last November, Michelle Bruce became Georgia's first openly trans elected official when she won seat on Riverdale's City Council. And Tom Murphy, Rapid City South Dakota Alderman, came out as being transgender last spring (go to www.nctequality.org/april04newsletter.pdf to read more about Murphy at).

NCTE commends these individuals for speaking up and living openly as transgender people while in the public eye.

Universities Take Steps to Protect Trans People on Campus

Last month the University of Oregon added university protections based on gender identity (see www.nctequality.org/UofOregonVictory.pdf to read more). In the past few weeks, two more universities have taken strong stances on protecting trans students, faculty, and staff on campus.

On September 22, the University of Nebraska's Association of Students unanimously voted to add gender identity and expression to the Senate's non-discrimination policy. This protects trans and other gender non-conforming students from discrimination in the Senate and in any Associated Students of the University of Nebraska approved organizations.

Soon after, on September 26, Tufts University Senate voted unanimously to pass a resolution urging the university to add gender identity and expression to its non-discrimination policy. The resolution, spearheaded by Tufts Senior Matthew Pohl, stated that "transgender students, faculty and staff at Tufts should not experience bias during application, employment, promotion and/or termination."

NCTE applauds these steps forward and congratulates the organizers at both the University of Nebraska and Tufts University for their efforts in working to extend protections to transgender people on campus. NCTE urges the administrations at both universities to follow the lead of these campus structures and add gender identity and expression to their university-wide non-discrimination policies.

NCTE Remembers Kaelin Bowers

On September 25, 2004 NCTE was given the sad news that trans activist and friend Kaelin Bowers had passed away. Kaelin was a very active team leader for NCTE's recent congressional education effort, Congressional Summer School, for which he led teams on four congressional visits. The following are comments from NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling:

"As a movement, we are greatly diminished that we will no longer have Kaelin's dedication, drive, intelligence and aggressive advocacy, which have added so much to our movement and would have meant even more in the future. In my experience, every trans person I have met is more courageous than most non-trans people could understand. If possible, this is even more true of good people like Kaelin who not only are transgender, but are openly and proudly trans people who use their new-found understanding of themselves to teach, inspire and protect others. We will remember Kaelin fondly and miss him immensely."