

# TRANSGENDER PANEL

## Forrest Antrum

Born in Cortland, raised in Ithaca, and now a fourteen year resident of Syracuse, Central New York is my home. Prior to age twenty-five, I have attended or eulogized over fifty funerals of friends and relatives---many who have died of AIDS and I remain, forever changed. The first thirty funerals gave me the strength to deal with all the related departures since.

How does this relate to being FTM, or simply Trans? There is nothing simple about my status, other than through the grace of God, today I am HIV- .

Perhaps because the journey of transition took thirty years ,having watched my friends drop like flies. I also have a healthy fear of diseases and STDs, reacting as though, everyone that I've had sex with is a liar, or just using universal precautions. Too often, someone tells me their HIV status is "clean." What the hell does that mean?

- Resident of Syracuse, 14 yrs
- Cornell University, Agricultural Sciences.....3 semesters
- Tompkins-Cortland Community College, Radio and Television-..AAS
- Simmons Institute of Funeral Services.....1998...AOS
- 10 year involvement, volunteer for SAGE Upstate, of CNY.....current
- Co- facilitator, transgendered youth, ACR.....current
- Peer Mentor, Onondaga Case Management, .....1 year
- Peerperspectives of Syracuse.....current
- Uzuri POC, Sage, member.....current

I am sure that my presence today is not because of my saucy language. Instead I am hoping to reach all those FTM's, their dates and partners, who pass so successfully as the other gender. Many are blending, not looking back, and this is the accepted norm. Finally, we are seen as regular men.

Hear is the danger. We also have taken on some of the norms of regular men. We sleep with men, women or both. Sometimes the Testosterone is not picky. Internet partners are easy and convenient. And there are many who transition, later in life. Collectively, many of us are the new, straight, gay, bisexual later in life, men and women of color, becoming the recent statistics, in new-found cases of HIV/AIDS.

That is why I am here, and remain. To quote an old Negro Spiritual, " B'lieve I'll run on.....and see what the ends gonna be"

Forrest Maurice Antrum  
Age 51

## Shekinah Love

My name is John, but to many I am known as Shekinah Love. I am a genderqueer/transgender/trans-fluid/non-gender specific, non-op, non-hormonal Divine Androgyne. I'm 25, sexually active kinky vegetarian, into natural healing and disease prevention.

I have been active in the queer and trans community for several years now, including being a facilitator of the San Francisco support group: United Genders of the Universe, who's founder, Sam Davis, helped start the very first ever Transgender Pride March in San Francisco, creating a separate Pride event....for the community, feeling that the mainstream gay pride was exclusionary and corporate driven.

I have also been a member of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, who printed the first ever Sex-Positive Safer Sex Pamphlet; its members were the first people to ever come forward in the media, as being diagnosed HIV positive.

I have been a member of other STD prevention groups/organizations ranging from Planned Parenthood, Syracuse ACR, and Santa Rosa, California's non-profit group Face to Face. I am also a massage therapist, Minister, and healer in Reiki/Energywork/Spiritual healing.

Shalom Namaste  
Shekinah Love