

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 2006

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- Book & Movie Reviews & Recommendations
- Transitioning in Ohio: The Legal Process
- Local & National Resources
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Welcome to TransOhio.Org!

When we first started to throw ideas back and forth about starting a newsletter which would span the GLBTQI community in Ohio, many people held their breath.

As we wrote in our Call for Writers and Artists article, Ohio is a red state. A bright, red state. We all know the stories of "Brother Jed" who has been known to preach on OSU's Oval. And our personal favorite "Evangelist", Chuck Spingola, who's known for his flag-pole climbing and fire starting abilities.

We kind of laugh at these guys, but really, looking at the big picture, it's not funny at all. It's unfortunate. Homophobia. Bi-phobia. Transphobia. All of it, it's no joke. It's no laughing matter.

TransOhio.Org is a multiple-

branched concept: a newsletter, a forthcoming website and a tangible organization. We've thrown ourselves into this venture head-first and plan on turning this into something big.

It's an opportunity to educate not only mainstream society, but also those groups of people who venture off the familiar path.

It's an opportunity for the GLBTQI community to educate, to lead and to give back to the community from which we grew up in or came out in. You can really define that in any way that is personal to you.

We believe in TransOhio.Org. Our short term, immediate goals include publishing a monthly newsletter and establishing an accessible website that serves is a central point for all TransOhio.Org

information.

Our long term vision includes establishing TransOhio.Org as a 501(c)3, which would make us a tax exempt organization and allow us to apply for local, national and federal grants. We'd also like to be able to provide "grant" assistance to help with some transition expenses, and to form a TransMentor program. As you can see, we've got our work cut out for us.

If you're interested in getting involved with any part of TransOhio.Org, email us at transohio@wowway.com.

We are currently accepting work and art from all GLBTQI communities, locally, and outside of Ohio.

Please email your work to transohio@wowway.com.

Welcome to TransOhio.Org!

As I Remember It and See It Now by Meral Crane

I want to thank TransOhio.Org for undertaking the launching of the TransOhio.Org Newsletter. Hopefully, it will continue the process of opening lines of communication among members of the community and energizing its members and allies so that GLBTQI thrive as productive, self respecting individuals with a positive

voice in society.

When I was asked to put down my thoughts on the past, present and future of the community, I could not help reflecting back some thirty-three years ago to the time when I first became involved with the needs and problems of gay and transgender people.

At that time I was fresh out of graduate school and had just landed my first major job as Director of the Human Sexuality Center at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Although the late '60's and early '70's marked the height of what came to be known as the "sexual revolution,"

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TransOhio.Org – Call for Writers & Artists

Ohio is a red state.

Ironically, its capital city, Columbus, is home to one of the largest GLBTQI populations in the country. Specifically, Columbus is a melting pot for the GLBTQI communities. We host the largest Pride event in Ohio. There are several bars, stores, coffee houses, weekly magazines and newspapers and a plethora of other media formats that allow GLBTQI people to connect and find resources.

But, for the Trans-community specifically, resources can be scattered, disorganized and are often left to be passed on to others by word of mouth. And sometimes, the good information is so underground, it's hard to find.

Our short term goal is to publish a local, monthly newsletter which includes the recurring following:

- calendar of local (and national) workshops and events
- book and movie reviews or recommendations
- online resources
- GLBTQI identities in the T-world

- local trans-friendly doctors, services, support groups, counselors, etc
- local professionals
- legal processes for transitioning in the state of Ohio
- guest writers

Everybody has something to share - something to say. Our intention is to have this 'written by the community, for the community'. From you, we're looking for:

- poetry & essays
- opinion essays
- coming out letters to family & friends
- photos & artwork
- local experiences of FTMs/MTFs
- classifieds: binders, wigs, clothing exchanges, etc.

What's important to you? What makes your soul warm and your heart happy? That's what we're looking for!

Long-term, well, that is another discussion and requires additional research on our part and we'll be happy to share that with everybody pretty soon. But, let us say that we're trying

to lay the foundation for something that could be pretty amazing.

Why do we want to do this? We'd like to see our community more connected and more involved with one another, see bridges built to other communities and these silos that we've lived in for so long broken down. We'd like to see people write and share their experiences with other people. Share the highs, talk about the lows.

We have a wealth of information that we carry around, daily, consistently – and we should use that as a catalyst for education, political and social change. But even more so, we need to share our experiences with those who are just beginning their own journey.

Interested? Email your ideas and work to: transohio@wowway.com



6-week GLBTQI Self-Defense Workshop Begins Soon!

Research shows that potential victims suffer significantly less harm when they resist a physical attack. This 6-week course teaches simple, easy-to-learn self defense skills that will help you defend yourself against most physical attacks. Some techniques that will be covered are:

- The attacker's vulnerable points
- Effective strikes, kicks and blocks
- Falling safely
- Escapes from pins and grabs
- Assertive body language
- Verbal self defense
- Relaxation & centering skills that will help you stay relaxed and functional under pressure

Date: Every Monday, October 16, 2006 - November 20, 2006

Time: 7pm-9pm (classes are 2 hrs)

Location: 206 Westwood Road, Columbus, 43214

Questions?

Email Kirsten: kirsten.e@sbcglobal.net or

Shane: transohio@wowway.com

There is no fee for this self-defense workshop. Donations are welcome, but not required.

A Community still not protected by Samuel Moore

Please don't be offended for my choice of words referring to people transitioning or FTM as transmen. This is a single choice of word for this article. It is not written to discredit or discriminate on men who use other words to describe or identify themselves.

FTM 2006: A Gender Odyssey left me with a sense of community. Educators, artists, parents, spouses, community members, MTF, and FTM's coming together in Seattle, WA on September 1st – 4th, 2006 was an amazing opportunity for a newly transitioning young man like myself. This weekend gave me a glimpse into a safe and tolerant world. Having started my transition just over a year ago this was my first opportunity to learn more and be with a large group of people going through some of the same experiences as myself. There were over 60 workshops to attend during the 4 day conference. I attended about six workshops between volunteering, sleeping, eating, and socializing.

One of the workshops that I went left me seeing how scary the world will be when it comes to my transition, those who have transitioned before me and for those who are still to come in choosing to live our life's the way we want. On Saturday, the first day of scheduled workshops, I went to, "The End of Stealth: Living Trans in the 21st Century." The speakers were really impressive with their knowledge in talking about the REAL ID Act, Social Security, and medical privacy and how these things are impacting the choice in America for transmen to live stealth.

This conversation was not about whether or not it is healthy, wrong, or the right choice to live our lives as transmen in

stealth. The focus was on the government side of whether or not we even have a choice to keep things in our lives private. America prides itself in the fact that we have freedom of privacy. However, I left wondering how putting a biological sex designator on my birth certificate, Social Security Card, driver's license, school reports, and any other location protects that privacy. I don't see how my biological sex is a trait that is necessary for the government to put on all pieces of information and database it all together. Freedom of living includes medical privacy and privacy within our own homes. How does my biological sex being a piece of government information protect my own right to privacy? The REAL ID act will heighten the accessibility to this information and make it more difficult for us to change what doctors put on our birth certificates when we are born.

I went to the conference feeling a real sense of community and safety. I felt freedom in being who I was without judgment of my gender, sexual orientation, or biological sex designated in my back pocket with my credit cards and social security card in my wallet. I really enjoyed my experience in meeting so many other men dealing with similar experiences as I from all over the United States. I think the conference was done well, offered a lot of important information, and educated everyone about something they didn't know already.

I know that I will definitely be going next year and I hope that as a community we realize the role we have in making America a safe place for us to live and the impact that legislation and government has on our right to choose how to live.

For more info on FTM 2006: A Gender Odyssey, please visit:
<http://www.transconference.org>

Local & National Calendar of Events

October 2006

- FTM Conference - Planning meeting (FTMs & SOFFAs Welcome), October 21-22, 2006, Columbus, Ohio, Contact Damien Montassi (speaquerpapa@yahoo.com) for more information
- Transcending Boundaries & PFLAG's Northeast Regional GLBTIQ Conference 2006: Celebrating the Spectrum of Sexuality, Gender & Sex, October 27 - 29, 2006, Worcester, MA. <http://www.transcendingboundaries.org>

November 2006

- Heartland in Action 2006, PFLAG Midwest Tri-Regional Conference, November 3-4, 2006, Chicago, IL.

July 2007

- CampOUT, July 26 - 29, 2007, Lothlorien Nature Sanctuary, Bloomington, IN. http://www.lagarou.org/campout_2007

September 2007

- Southern Comfort Conference, September 11-16, 2007, Atlanta, GA. <http://www.sccat.org>

Would you like to add your event to our calendar? Email event information to transobio@wowway.com

The Fine Art of Shaving by Samuel Two Bears

I'm beginning to think that FTM also stands for "Fur on The Mind" because no matter what, it seems the subject of how much hair we're going to get and when we're going to get it, where we'll get it or if we'll lose it eventually always comes up. Will we have hair on our chests? Will our arms look like orangutans? Will it come out of our ears before we expect it to and when (oh when!) will we get our first sprouting of whiskers? Sometimes there are situations that we don't immediately consider but that can only be encountered with time and experience.

"Before we go to the beach my girlfriend shaves the monkey butt on my back" says a buddy of mine. He's got a funny little patch of hair just above his belt line and she plays with it first by shaving it to look like a furry butt before completely taking all the hair off. Other times she pulls it into a tuft and draws a troll doll on his back, but not with the black permanent marker anymore. Perhaps it's good to share that cis-gendered guys don't always have it necessarily easier just because they've had the good fortune to be born with all their proper parts and fur coming in as scheduled.

"We were camping and my husband called me into the tent" says a cis-buddy's wife. "He had a strange sound to his voice and I wondered what was wrong. I get in there and he's got his razor out and tells me he'd sat on a log to take off his swim trunks and now there's a big ball of pitch stuck to the hairs on the backside of his balls and he's scared to death of accidentally neutering himself tryin' to shave it off". She laughs as she says, "You should've seen the look on his face, poor baby, all those times he teased me for being a bit clumsy and now his nut sack is swingin' in the breeze needin' me to shave it for him! So I raised the razor and said "Nieman Marcus is having a sale next week sweetheart..."

Maybe a hairy nut sack isn't all that desirable after all.

The old timers can chuckle amongst themselves, they haven't forgotten how it was, staring in the mirror at upper lips trying to will the follicles to life. My father, 74 and a retired lumber truck driver, gets a big kick out of telling me "Jest smear some chicken manure on yer upper lip, that'll fertilize it good - actually, just grab the first chicken ya see and stick yer face in its ass.... Best when it's fresh from the bird!" and he roars with laughter. Thanks Dad, is that how you got yours started?

I've watched my old man shave, he's got a unique style which involves a lot of tongue action and some downright personal technique. Seems that when he gets to the whiskers that are anywhere around his mouth he screws up his face, sticks his tongue up along his teeth under where he's aiming to shave and then uses his tongue to push the skin outward thus raising the stubble

to meet the approaching blade of the razor.

First he does all along his upper lip, then all around under his lower lip. Grimace, pooch out the stubble with his tongue, scrape, repeat. Grab the nose and hoist it out of the way so's to get that little bit right under the middle of it, and if possible "trim some of them nose hairs if ya can whilst yer at it". You'd really have to see it to appreciate it fully, and bear in mind that I've not lived with any men in my 51 years aside from him when I was a kid, so as far as I know that's how it's done. Right?

This is where a good gender therapist comes in handy, especially since mine is a transsexual woman and prior to her having spent a fortune in electrolysis she had her own personal experience in sliding a wickedly sharp metal blade along her cheeks and carefully tackling those tight corners around the lips and under her nose.

I showed her how my Dad sticks his tongue in his cheek and then works both tongue and razor in a way that is reminiscent of a toothless old geezer gumming a tough piece of pot roast while attempting not to scrape too many layers of leathery skin off his face.

I asked her, "How come it's done that way?" Being the professional she is, she says as tactfully as possible, "Well, honestly I don't know that it generally is done that way... I never shaved like that". Umm-hmmm... my Dad, I should've known. She and I looked at each other a moment and then both burst out laughing. It's just a geezer thing I guess, like him knowing that it's time to mow the lawn when the grass tickles his balls.

So I've had all of 2 whole injections of T and a dear friend of mine in Canada sent me a gift yesterday. It's a nice travel kit with a wooden handled razor and brush, some actual cream to shave with that comes in a tube and an aftershave. The fragrance is light and subtle and I can't wait to begin my own personal ritual of shaving. What a thoughtful gift, I'll treasure it for years to come.

Now... Don't you think those four hairs on my chin look darker and thicker today than they did yesterday? Should I shave them or do you think that by leaving them as stubble they'll help me to pass?

Thoughts Regarding Passing by Robbi Cohn

The topic of "passing" has received a lot of attention amongst some of my support groups of late. "Passing", in the vernacular of the Transgender community, is the ability to present in the appropriate gender without detection. It has been my contention that those who are consumed with this issue do a disservice to themselves and to the community. I make the point that it lends itself to a sense of elitism and often has the same biases we, as a minority, have tried so hard to overcome. I still hold to this point of view when the motive for passing serves to contribute to a sense of shame, or embarrassment about being Transgender. Those who are TG and who prefer to NOT be seen with others who are TG are as guilty of discrimination as any other bigot.

After careful consideration and upon hearing some well founded arguments (figuratively speaking) from friends and acquaintances, however, I have a new perspective. For many, the necessity to pass is a safety concern. For others, it is a requirement to remain gainfully employed. In the former situation, the ability to pass may provide protection against the victimization that accompanies discrimination and intolerance. Passing may keep someone from being attacked or from coming to harm because of a societal predilection to fear what we don't understand and to hate what we fear.

In the latter situation, we are only too familiar with the case of individuals losing their jobs upon the employer's discovery that they are transgender. In order to ensure that they can provide for themselves and for their families, it is not only prudent but critically important for them to be able to live in stealth, undetected.

As long as we live in a society that feels entitled to withhold equal rights to all of its citizens, there will remain a need for certain individuals to hide the fact that they are different...regardless of what that difference may be. Of course, this is not always possible. The withholding of civil rights, as they pertain to racial issues, is blatant and unmistakable. Civil rights, as they apply to the transgender world, signify an entirely new dimension...a new frontier, so to speak, and it will take a concerted effort by many to realize the changes we so desperately need.

In the meanwhile, those who can live without the necessity to hide, those who can fight for those rights openly, and without fear, must lead the struggle. Eventually, we hope to see the day when discrimination and bigotry, fear and hatred, have been subdued. If and when that day comes, we can dispense with the necessity to pass in order to keep a job or to remain safe.

The Gender Identity Project at the LGBT Center in NYC presents:
Trans Family Support: A group for family members of transgender people

When: Wednesday, October 4th, 2006, 6-7:30pm
Wednesday, November 8th, 2006, 6-7:30pm
Wednesday, December 6th, 2006, 6-7:30pm

Where: The NYC LGBT Community Center
208 West 13th Street (between 7th and 8th avenues)

For More info: call (212) 620-7310, ext. 254 or email:
ray@gaycenter.org

CampOUT 2007 by La Fraternité Du Loup-Garou

July 26th through July 29th 2007, transmen take to the woods as La Fraternité du Loup-Garou hosts its third CampOUT at Lothlorien Nature Sanctuary 20 minutes south of Bloomington Indiana.

Not a conference, not a run, CampOUT is a unique event that is connected to both the trans and leather communities. It is a gathering for trans/leatherfolk and their supporters held at a secluded private land collective. La Garou's goal is to provide a safe space to explore

gender and sexuality in a positive environment.



CampOUT is a social gathering with many opportunities to relax, have fun

and even learn. Meals are served camp style and included in the admission. There are workshops and demos relating to both trans and leather issues. Past workshops have included a presentation on phalloplasty and making your own toys. Rebecca Huston of tatoohathen.com is a regular attendee. There is always nightly entertainment, from campfires to dance parties...

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As I Remember It and See It Now by Meral Crane

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the label transsexual was still greeted by most people as designating a perversion and met with profound suspicion, hostility and ridicule. Nonetheless, transgender people in the community became aware of the Sexuality Center and felt comfortable dropping in to a warm, accepting and “safe” place. I hate to admit it now, but that was about all we were able to provide back then. My staff and I were young, idealistic and open-minded, but powerless. We could be empathetic, but trans people needed accepting physicians willing to prescribe hormones and do reassignment surgeries. Disapproval was widespread, even of professionals like myself who were willing to address transgender concerns. I recall as late as the 1980s being put down by some colleagues with the words, “She deals with those transsexual people!” I was accused in the human sexuality seminars which I taught at the OSU Medical School of promoting homosexuality and transsexuals simply because I included the topic in my syllabus.

I am reminded now of a young person with whom I worked soon after I came to Ohio State in 1975. At that time I was working in the Counseling clinic of the Student Health Center at OSU. A graduate student in the physical sciences began seeing me and was clearly deeply troubled. I remember that he said he could not tell me his big problem because he could not look me in the face and admit the feelings that he has had. He stated that he would have to put a paper bag over his head in order to share what he felt. Finally, one day, he took what must have been for him a profound risk, revealing his feelings about his struggle with gender identity. Though he was a very successful graduate student, he could not concentrate on his studies.

Ultimately, he left OSU and went to New York City in order to avoid his family and all those who knew him. He later contacted me to let me know that he was working in private homes as a maid in drag. I was profoundly moved by this young person and have always regretted that I could not convince him to stay here and take some steps toward his transition while at the same time continuing his education. He often comes to my mind now as an example of the needless suffering with which all too many trans people have had to cope, both past and present. Understandably, transgender people, who struggle with feelings of isolation, shame and guilt, often internalize their lack of self-acceptance. Bonding together can and does create a sense of belonging and strength to face the world with dignity. It has been my hope that the Gender Program established in the late 70s has been able to facilitate to some degree the building of that safe community.

More recently, in the late 1990s, it was discouraging when a

post-op MtF with whom I had worked was escorted out of the dressing room in a clothing store in spite of her protestations that she is legally a woman. Neither the police on site nor the management had any sensitivity to speak of. I wrote letters to no avail. For a while we all boycotted that store chain, but as far as I know the management remained as closed minded as ever. On the other hand, a nearby college told a mature graduate student MtF in full transition that she would be kicked out of the school if she attempted to use a woman’s rest room again. I immediately wrote a letter expressing outrage to the president of the school and eventually received a call from his assistant to tell me that the situation would be looked into and corrected and that the school had begun to provide unisex restroom options!

More hopefully, in an incident only couple years ago, police behavior was remarkably professional from the start. In this case, I got a phone call from a trans woman who had previously been in the gender program who said that her van had been broken into and her tools were stolen in broad daylight while eating lunch in a local fast food restaurant. When I got the call, I was concerned that when the police arrived they might not treat her with respect. For that reason and because it was a weekend when I could take the time, my husband and I went to the site of the robbery to be present for the encounter with the police. Much to my pleasure, when a woman Columbus police officer arrived, she gathered information about the theft in a respectful and matter of fact way without making an issue of the fact that the victim was transgender, something I dare say would have been almost inconceivable in Boston or Columbus thirty years ago.

It is clear, of course, that gender issues are more out in the open today than in the past, and for many in the public at large they are not quite as charged as they once were. Moreover, the trans community has in recent years found ways to network and to develop a kind of social solidarity that would have been unthinkable thirty years ago. Gender issues are no longer as closeted as they were and the community has started benefiting from some public airing in film and other media. However, as long as those who produce the media are not themselves of the community, misrepresentations and sensationalism might continue to be the norm. Unfortunately, trans people tend to still be presented as superficial and are often the butt of tasteless humor. I count on all the gifted and creative transgender people and allies to take on producing some of the future material for public view.

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As I Remember It and See It Now by Meral Crane

(cont'd from page 6)

I do not mean to be a Pollyanna when I say that things have changed some for the better in the past thirty years. Not enough, by any means, but at least a beginning has been made. And yet, my concern is that while things can go forward, they can also, most certainly, slide back. I was more hopeful few years ago when then Ohio governor Celeste clearly supported moves for equality for sexual orientation. I was part of the team of invited area professionals who traveled the state to educate and thus help execute the governor's ordinance. Now, however, all that has stopped.

What should be always emphasized is that the community is not looking for special treatment, but only equal treatment under the law. There are no guarantees that the small gains made will not be rolled back in the hostile political atmosphere of 2006 and beyond. All too many of our political, social and religious leaders have used sexual and gender orientation cynically as a wedge issue to promote their own bigotry or narrow careerism. This is true nowhere more than in Ohio, and although Columbus is in many ways relatively open, the state as a whole is very backward.

As Lynne Bowman of Equality Ohio has pointed out, "Ohio is dead last!" We are actually the 51st state (if we include the District of Columbia) when it comes to GLBTQI rights! Just by way of example, there is no equality for GLBT families, but we do have a so-called "Defense of Marriage" law and a constitutional amendment specifically aimed to deny marriage equality for the GLBTQI Ohioans! Ohio still does not have a non-discrimination law that protects GLBTQI Ohioans from being

fired from their jobs. There is no hate crimes law specifying gender identity as a reason for protection. There is no school bully law protecting GLBTQI youth. Transgender Ohioans still cannot change their gender on their birth certificates.

Finally, I think we are at a crossroads. We must work harder to insure the uncertain gains of the past and work in whatever ways we as individuals feel comfortable to expand on what has been accomplished. Things we can do include talking to friends, co-workers, neighbors and family members, contacting local officials about equality issues, working for equality in the workplace, patronizing businesses that support GLBTQI equality (<http://www.EqualityOhio.org>), volunteering time for GLBTQI equality and giving money to GLBTQI equal rights groups. The bottom line is that we must not let things return to what they were many years ago. Together we must work to insure that the future will be one of greater tolerance than either the past or present have been.

For more information about Meral G.Crane, M.A., L.P.C.C., I.M.F.T., or the Gender Dysphoria Program of Central Ohio, email Meral at crane@genderprogram.com or visit <http://www.genderprogram.com>.

CampOUT 2007 by La Fraternité Du Loup-Garou

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and maybe even a show on Lothlorien's solar powered sound stage.

This year La Garou has the opportunity to bring author and activist Raven Kaldera in as a guest speaker. He has written extensively on transgender issues, sexuality, BDSM and spirituality. Negotiations are in progress to bring Raven to CampOUT 2007. La Garou can cover his travel expenses if just 10 pre-registrations are received by April 1st.

Admission for CampOUT 2007 Thursday thru Sunday early pre-registration is \$90 and Friday thru Sunday weekend pre-registration is \$65 if paid by May 1st. Costs go up June 1st and again July 1st and at the gate admission is \$150 for the full

camp, \$125 for the weekend. Admission cost includes meals, camp fees and firewood.

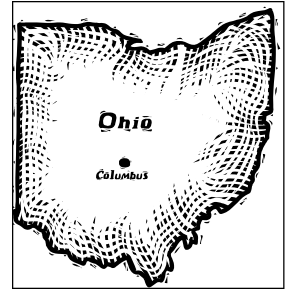
For more information or a registration form visit the web site at http://www.lagarou.org/campout_2007 or email LaGarou@hotmail.com or write La Fraternité Du Loup-Garou, PO Box 1031, Holland, OH 43528.



Group photo of some CampOUT 2006 attendees.

Local Resources

- EqualityOhio.Org: www.equalityohio.org
- BRAVO (Buckeye Regional Anti-Violence Organization): www.bravo-ohio.org
- TransFamily of Cleveland: www.transfamily.org
- The Crystal Club: www.thecrystalclub.org
- Stonewall Columbus: www.stonewallcolumbus.org
- Outlook News: www.outlooknews.com
- Gay People's Chronicle: www.gaypeopleschronicle
- Gender Dysphoria Program of Central Ohio: www.genderprogram.com



Would you like to add your local organization or resource to our list?
Email transohio@wowway.com.

National Resources

- PFLAG's Transgender Network:
www.pflag.org/PFLAG_s_Transgender_Network.tnet.0.html
- Hudson's FTM Resource Guide: www.ftmguide.org
- Transster.com: www.transster.com
- Tgcrossroads: www.tgcrossroads.org
- Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org



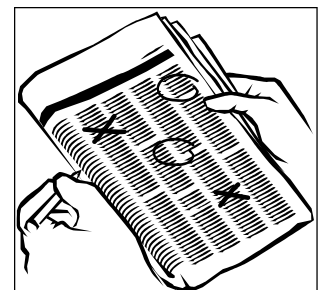
Would you like to add your national organization or resource to our list?
Email transohio@wowway.com.

Classifieds

Employment
For Sale
For Trade
Networking
For Rent
Roommates

Please submit your classified ads by
email to transohio@wowway.com.

TransOhio.Org is not a dating service
and will not print ads that contain
sexual-based services, personals or ads
containing nudity or sexually explicit
content.



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