

Renaissance News



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Vision - Integrity - Quality

September, 1991

Those 900 phone lines

It costs up to \$1.96 per minute to 'reach out and touch someone'

by Angela Gardner

As recently as 10 years ago, making contact with another man who liked wearing women's clothing was a nearly impossible task. The underground nature of the transgendered community made heterosexual crossdressers extremely difficult to find in those prehistoric, precomputer days.

Welcome to the Nineties. Men in dresses are everywhere — they're in the movies, on television, and in mainstream magazines. And with the recent growth of computer-controlled 900 telephone lines, you can get a man in a dress just by picking up the phone.

Of course, this reporter would never call a 900 for personal gratification. (Okay, once. It sounded intriguing, but I felt cheap afterward.) I made this investigation just to help the public know what 900 numbers were all about.

All of the services I explored were voice mail systems, essentially telephone personal ads. The caller is

greeted by a prerecorded message. During this message, some systems offer you a chance to hang up without incurring any charges; some don't. They all tell you what the charges will be and how you will be billed. One system gave their rates for 30-second increments. It somehow sounds less expensive when they said \$.80 per half minute. But 15 minutes at his rate will add up to \$29.40, plus tax. Most services also charge a connection fee of \$1 or \$2.

After being told what you'll pay, the prerecorded voice will offer you a menu to choose from that will vary with the line you have called. The "Crossdressers Heatline" is a part of a larger system that offers other choices geared to a gay male audience. After you are connected to the crossdresser section, you will hear more promotional info on the line's other services. You will pay a \$1 connection fee and \$.90 per minute. On the Heatline, you can listen to messages from crossdressers and those who wish to meet crossdress-

ers. Heatline claims that there are over 300 messages and they are changed every day. Where do the messages come from? You can record your sexy message for the Heatline by calling 800-365-GUYS.

I listened to the Heatline for about eight minutes. Subtracting the time spent listening to promos for other services, I heard only about five or six minutes of actual messages. They came from all over the country, but none from this area. The people ranged from those who seemed very familiar with the scene to those who could barely talk and were so nervous they didn't leave their number after asking listeners to call them. For this eight-minute slice of Heaven, I was charged \$8.92. The charge appeared on the MCI services section of my phone bill as "Heatline."

The "Crossdressers Partyline" advertises the number 800-753-TVTS and the rate of \$.98 per half minute, billable to your VISA or
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Lack of state policy for transsexual inmates angers federal magistrate

A federal magistrate in California has refused to order state prison officials to provide female hormones to a pre-op transsexual inmate. But in a move that may provide hope to transsexuals behind bars in all California prisons, he ordered the Department of Corrections to de-

velop formal policies for treating transsexual prisoners.

U.S. Magistrate John Moulds said that providing hormones to Georgette Rebecca Belcher, 49, was a medical decision that he could not make. But he sharply criticized the state for having no formal policy for

treating transsexual inmates.

"If you want to drive someone crazy, tell them that they don't qualify for treatment under a policy you don't have," Moulds told prison officials in July. "That is Kafkaesque, to put it mildly."

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Chapter information

New Jersey

South Jersey: Kelly Harris, chapter leader. Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Dina Amberle, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Summer hours: meeting starts at 9:00 p.m. For information, call (215) 946-8887.

Pennsylvania

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Brenda Davidson, chapter leader. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets the first Saturday of the month. Presently, the chapter lacks a permanent meeting site, so call (717) 780-1578 for latest information and meeting location. The June meeting will be at 8:00 p.m.

Pennsylvania

Reading: The National Board has revoked this chapter's charter. If your membership there has not expired, please contact National Secretary Susan Crane, P.O. Box 552, King of Prussia, PA 19046.

Renaissance News

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Articles must be submitted for publication one month in advance.

For current information about Renaissance, call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the gender community at large.

AFFILIATE INFORMATION...

The board of directors has approved a new policy for the development of chapters and affiliates.

- Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit institution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

- Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance affiliate will pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlim-

ited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

Current affiliated organizations are:

- Monmouth/Ocean Transgenderists, PO Box 1326, Brick, NJ 08723

For current information about national Renaissance events and activities, call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day.

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

7th So. Jersey Chapter
Speaking As a Woman
w/ Alison Laing

7th LSV Chapter

19th -23rd Paradise in the Poconos

21st Gr. Phila. Chapter
A Feminine Inner-Self
w/ Alison Laing

OCTOBER

5th So. Jersey Chapter

5th Ren. LSV Chapter

19th Gr. Phila. Chapter
Feminine Speaking
w/ Lila B. Alson

NOVEMBER

2nd So. Jersey Chapter

2nd Ren. LSV Chapter

16th Gr. Phila. Chapter
Dr. Frank Hajcak
on sexual relations

AND, DON'T FORGET ABOUT...

- Background Papers** are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-*Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing*, 2-*Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing*, 3-*PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others*, 4-*The Matter of Children*, 5-*An Annotated Bibliography*, 6-*Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View*, 7-*What Is Renaissance?*, and 8-*AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics*.

- The **Pen Pal Project**. If you

are willing to write letters to pen pals, please inform Maryann Kirkland or write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

- A gift of only \$6 gives a **transgendered inmate** 12 issues of the *Renaissance News*. Please help provide this needed support to our sisters in prison.

- A few copies of the deluxe edition of Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.

JoAnn Altman Stringer™
SURVIVAL

My avocation, my passion in life is photography, primarily fine art photography. But there are often times when my passion doesn't pay the light bill. Then my vocation comes into play. My vocation? Doing whatever job I can get at the moment. Actually, I am more career minded than that, but I have been the victim of an odd string of different jobs over the years. The bottom line was I needed a job to live and to simply exist.

To transsexuals this thought takes on more importance than to "normal" people. Many transsexuals can't find work due to their gender issues. I mean, what business would want to hire someone who looks kind of strange, if you know what I mean? Any job in the work place becomes a life line from a torpedoed ship in the middle of this gender ocean. You'll take whatever you can get. But a few of us have been able to build up careers that superseded our gender issues.

Several months ago, the manager of the men's clothing establishment I was employed at called me in and told me I was fired. He said that he hadn't seen the "urgency" in me that he wanted to see, especially since I had been hired as a manager trainee. In the next breath he told me that I was one of his best sales people. Now, what kind of manager fires his best sales person? The kicker to this whole nasty business was that I was hired as a full-time employee. During that time we had a change of management; the manager who hired me quit. I had asked my first manager for a performance review more than two dozen times, but one never came. The new manager was asked nearly half a dozen times and still one was never done. According to corporate regulations, I should have been given a review after 30 days. Hence, I was fired for doing something wrong, but I was never told what that something was so I could correct my mistake.

During this time my husband was looking for his first job as a police officer, so I was supporting him. But when you are nearly 40 years old looking for jobs in a 21-year-old profession, jobs are few and far between. As luck would have it, the very same week I was fired, Joseph got a full-time position as an officer in a drug control facility.

As I had been in this arena many times before, I put together new resumes, brushed up my job-hunting clothes, registered for unemployment, and hit the pavement in search of meaningful work.

After sending out nearly 40 resumes and applications, and going through nearly 10 interviews, I landed a new position within six weeks. As luck would have it, it was in a profession I wanted to work in full time — photography I got a position as a photography studio manager, and will probably move up to district manager in less than a year. But I had put in applications for everything from secretary to federal management positions.

Too, this area of the country (Colorado) is one of the poorest and most economically depressed in the nation. It equates to many poor counties in the South. About 85 percent of the jobs here are for unskilled labor, and overall pay is below \$5,50 per hour. One man controls the job market here, and most of the unskilled labor positions are taken by illegal Hispanics. If you are a white, educated female, there is no job for you in Weld county. Because of these factors you can see the desperation — and frustration — I felt in my job search.

But I kept going forward in my job search. If one interview didn't pan out, I'd look toward the next one. The right job was just around the corner, I always thought. For each interview, or even just to go pick up an application I always dressed and acted professionally. I never know whom I might be talk-

ing to. My attitude was always positive and self-assured. (My husband says I am the most positive person he has ever met — he hates it!) My resumes were very well done and looked professional. During each interview I looked the interviewer in the eye, and gave short, honest answers. As a matter of fact, several people said I interviewed very nicely. But no job. Still the one for me was just around the corner.

Then it happened! I met Marcus, my new district manager. His attitude toward life is very like my own. I came right out and told him, quite bluntly I might add, that I was the best photographer in town and my portfolio proved it. My attitude was straight-forward, open and honest, and extremely self-assured. This was just the kind of person he was looking for. I landed a god job after six desperate weeks of searching by always being professional and self-motivated.

Anyone can get a job at a fast-food greasy spoon that pays minimum wage. For many transsexuals this seems like suitable employment and they are thankful for the job. Bull crackers! More transsexual women (and men!) can land good corporate jobs by believing in themselves, having a positive outlook on life, and presenting themselves in a professional manner. Why settle for some greasy, sweaty job when you can have a career? It's not really a question of gender here, you know. It's a question of believing in yourself and setting your goals to match your talents and abilities.

☞ *For the past 18 months, JoAnn has contributed her insightful columns to RN. In October, she will conclude that hectic schedule; yet she will continue to share her opinions with us in the pages of "The Forum" from time to time. We thank her for her fine contributions in the past, and look forward to her continued writings.*

—PAW & PJS

Photographer records Baltimore female impersonator scene

The on-stage performances and behind-the-scenes preparation by Baltimore's female impersonators has been recorded and was on display at a photo exhibit last month.

Elizabeth Brady Robinson, who is majoring in photography at the Maryland Institute of Art, began photographing female impersonators for a class exercise. At first, she was merely "intrigued by it all." But the project soon took on a life of its own, providing Robinson with a continuing interest in photographing the world of female impersonation. She accumulated some 300 images of drag queens taken both on stage in in their dressing rooms.

She said her original intent was to record just the transition process. "Most people don't realize how much time and effort goes into making the transition into the illu-

sion of a woman," she said. These rare, candid glimpses into the queens' private chambers are titillating and provocative because they combine both male and female images in a theatrical juxtaposition. Robinson has captured the essence of impersonation.

But she decided to take the project a step further and record the on-stage performances of these men

presenting the illusion of being women.

A review of the exhibit in the *Baltimore Gay Paper* noted that "her photos of the entertainers on stage dramatically reflect the movement and intensity of the numbers being performed. The unique angles of some of the photos creatively contrast the energy of the performer with the reaction of the crowd."

"Her unique perspective and desire to photograph the individual and an entertainer has created a visually appealing, sometimes serious, often humorous look at Baltimore's drag community," the review also said.

An exhibition of work from Robinson's extensive drag portfolio was held at Baltimore's Fontanne Gallery in August. The exhibit was entitled "Bitches & Queens."

Notice

A person leaving the August Greater Philadelphia meeting struck a member's car in the parking lot and sped off, but not before being seen by witnesses.

If the driver of the hit-and-run car comes forward and contacts the chapter, there will be no need to contact the authorities.

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Anthropologist says —

Androgynous people provide raw material for cultural change

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Only when they are with sympathetic groups do transgendered people speak about their special blending of feminine and masculine characteristics. This is because androgyny (having both male and female traits) is frowned on by most of Western society. Now, an anthropologist may make androgyny more acceptable by developing a theory which credits androgynous people with solving many of the problems that have faced the species since humans first walked erect.

Dr. Gary Mihalik, who is also a psychiatrist and medical director at a Midwestern hospital, says that some people are by nature "psychologically androgynous." That is, they have a strong mix of male and fe-

male characteristics. He contrasts these people with typically masculine men or feminine women.

Mihalik says that psychologically androgynous people use both their feeling and their intellect to an equal degree, rather than relying primarily on one or the other. This mix "provides the raw material for change," Mihalik said. "These people are the ones who come up with creative solution to problems."

Problem solving has been one of the major challenges to the survival of the human race. Unlike fruit flies or rats, who rely on sheer numbers to maintain their species, humans must depend upon their ability to devise solutions to complex social or environmental problems. This is where psychological androgyny

comes in.

"People who are strongly sex-stereotyped can't come up with new solutions," said Mihalik. "They tend to be more accepting of the status quo. When a culture is in trouble, psychologically androgynous people often come up with creative ideas and solutions that get them away from the past — and out of trouble."

While other cultures may not have realized why androgynous individuals were important, these people were, nevertheless, afforded positions of respect and responsibility. Cultures that honored androgynous members included Native American, Polynesian, ancient Arabic, and ancient Indian.

Among males, Mihalik says three psychological patterns are common:

- Masculine man — the traditional male who is very independent but not very nurturing;
- Feminine man — the "New Age" male who is nurturing but often dependent; and
- Psychologically androgynous man — a male who is nurturing while still retaining a separate sense of his own identity.

Lesbians and gay males "are more likely to have a greater degree of psychologically linked androgynous traits," said Mihalik. This is probably also true for transgendered people as well. But just as sexual orientation is no guarantee of psychological androgyny, neither is gender role/gender image.

"A very butch woman could be a masculine sex-typed woman, not an androgynous one; and vice versa" for a very feminine man, he said.

The key, it seems, is not necessarily having crossed the psychological gender line, but erasing it so that traits on one side blend with those on the other.

Reach out and touch

(continued from page 1)

MasterCharge. The 800 number's menu lists a 900 number that will get you into the same system, only the charge appears on your phone bill. However, the 900 number has a \$2 connection fee.

The messages on this service were mostly from men who wanted to meet crossdressers and transsexuals. There was a sexy TS from Seattle who sounded interesting (Now where did I put her number?) There were more East Coast people on this line, but I had to go through a lot of people from other parts of the country. I haven't gotten the bill for this one yet, but it will probably be around \$8 also.

900-HIM-2-FEM advertises itself as "a complete TV-TS-CD resource." It also has a connection fee of \$2, yet charges only a \$1.07 per minute. At any time during the welcoming message, you can hang up without

being charged. If you stay on the line, you are given another number, 900-990-4843, that will put you into the system at a flat rate of \$9 for 12 minutes. This is \$.48 cheaper than the per minute rate for a savings of \$5.84 for the 12-minute period.

This system seems to offer the most choices for the transgendered community. The menu provides five separate sections: prerecorded TV fantasies; a bulletin board that has information about crossdresser support groups, events, and medical practitioners; stories about crossdresser's true life experiences; personal messages; and the opportunity to record your own message.

Of all of the 900 services, this one seems to be the most concerned with crossdressers and in serving the community. But I think I will most likely be saving my money to spend an evening on the town.

THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

In July it seemed like every periodical published in or around Philadelphia made mention of the death of former Mayor Frank Rizzo. *RN* readers probably thought they were spared/left out. Guess again, gentle reader. Here is are a couple of Rizzo tales about crossdressing...

In the late 50's it was the custom of some members of the Philadelphia gay community to hold an annual Halloween drag parade down Locust Street. As head of the Sixth Police District, Police Captain Frank Rizzo put a halt to the annual festivities. Nearly 30 years later, Rizzo explained this by saying he was acting only in response to requests. "It was the business community that objected to it and the gay community themselves because a lot of them got hurt" by gay bashers. Evidently, because police could not prevent the violence, the parade was killed. That would be like canceling the mummies' parade because of public drunkenness.

In that same 1983 interview with the *Philadelphia Gay News*, Rizzo claimed that he loved the drag queen he encountered regularly in the district. "I used to work Broad Street on the New Year's Day parade and all of the queens would come up to me and kiss me. They were my friends."



In more local news, the marriage of Philly's most famous transsexual is on the rocks after a decade.

Rachel Harlow says she and her husband Girard Billebault "are living apart." He says they will divorce; she says no.

Although separated, Harlow won't be idle. She still is working on her autobiography, a project she began shortly after she had her sexual reassignment surgery in 1972. "I do it in spurts," she said of her writing. "It's just about complete."

She claims the book already has a publisher, but refused to say who.

"When — and if — published, the memoirs could be *memwows*," said *Daily News* columnist Stu Bykofsky. "Back in her single-o days, she hosted Harlow's — first on Bank Street, later at 22nd and Market — which were the hottest clubs in town. She had dated the rich and famous, including the late City Councilman Jack Kelly." Kelly was the brother of Princess Grace of Monaco.

In 1988, and with the backing of \$2.5 million, she reopened a more opulent version of Harlow's in the Bourse. But the target audience didn't patronize the club, and it closed less than a year later.



Speaking of famous transsexuals, British model Tula is featured in this month's *Playboy*.

The photo layout shows the tall, sensuous blonde artfully slipping out of men's haberdashery and revealing herself in a full frontal nude shot. Even accounting for *Playboy*'s penchant for airbrushing, she is a sight to behold.

Accompanying the layout is an interview which may raise something else among crossdressing readers. Tula posed to show "that transsexuals can be attractive, that we can look sexy and that we don't have hairy chests and all the things that one conjurs up about transsexuals, confusing them with transvestites who are *so* different. In other words, I wanted to make a statement." She certainly did.

By the way, Tula has a new millionaire boyfriend according to a supermarket tabloid; he's "playboy financier" Yacov Saloman. He is quoted as saying he is not concerned that Tula used to be a man. "She's all woman, believe me," Saloman said. "She's just stunning."

Now, thanks to *Playboy*, we all know that to be true.



Maybe Harlow could have made a go of it at the Bourse if she had plugged into the new fad now sweep-

ing the tonier discos in the Soho and Chelsea sections of London — young men dressing up as sexy, attractive women, and getting paid for it.

The girls who can manage to look like Madonna or Marilyn Monroe perform, while those who just look beautiful merely sit around or dance with customers. While some of them told the German magazine *Quick* that they had never done drag before and had to have their mothers or sisters teach them about makeup, others said they were transsexuals and were working to save the money for a sex change.

Owners of clubs like Wag, Heaven, and the Empire Ballroom say the boys are a big hit with tourists.



Many of the tourists checking out the London crossdressing scene are German. So why were some Germans upset to learn that a local beauty queen is actually a man?

Before 7,000 spectators, Michelle Ziegler, 21, was named Miss Bayreuth. According to a judge, Michelle, who is just under six feet tall, was "the most beautiful woman to enter the contest in 11 years." But a "friend" later tipped off authorities that Michelle was really a man named Michael.

Michelle immediately owned up to her genetic gender, but said that she believed herself to be a woman although she hasn't yet had surgery. She said that she has been crossdressing since she was 14.

Despite the public furor that quickly developed, authorities did not strip her of her title, and when asked if she would enter the Miss Germany competition, Michelle replied, "Why not?"

For those who appreciate irony, the contest was held in the Wagner Festspielhaus, a hall memorializing Richard Wagner and the site of the famous Bayreuth opera festival. There is historical evidence, reported in the book *Transvestites* by Magnus Hirschfeld, that the

THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

famous German composer was perhaps a transvestite.



Germans aren't the only ones who have been fooled by beautiful boys entering beauty contests. In Durban, South Africa, Johann Kleingbiel entered the Miss Beautiful Legs contest sponsored by a makers of a ladies' razor as Sharde Kleingbiel and nearly won!

"He looked really stunning. If he hadn't told us he was a man, we would've been none the wiser," said Liz Clarke, a contest judge.

"I didn't intend to conceal the fact that I am a man from the judges," said Kleingbiel, who reports he loves dressing up as a woman. "The spectators thought I was just one of the girls, but the sponsors of the contest knew I was a man."

After Sharde won seven preliminary heats, the sponsors disqualified him, saying it was not fair to the real girls in the contest. Smith said that the sponsors were really worried that Kleingbiel would win the contest and make them look foolish.

But the winner, a real girl named Maggie Caldwell, thought disqualifying Kleingbiel was wrong. "I think it was very unfair that the kicked Sharde out," she said. "Quite honestly, he has really beautiful legs."



Hollywood producers for a new Fox television series *Best of the Worst* put out a "cattle call" for strange acts and weird people recently, but only 13 folks showed up, including an Elvis impersonator, a man who told jokes while escaping from a straitjacket, and two crossdressed men.

"It's scary when weird people look normal," said production publicist Valerie Scott.



Arnold Springer, professor of Russian history at the California State University campus in Long Beach must of been busy when the auditions for *Best of the Worst* were

held. Otherwise, he would have been sure to show up won a spot on the show. Springer, who is 52 years old stands over 6 feet tall and wears a beard and a mustache, teaches his classes in drag. His outfits include a tank top revealing a black-and-white polka-dot bra, brightly colored skirts, and tights. He wears long earrings, makeup, and nail polish.

Springer claims that he is expressing his opinion that society has gone haywire and he has a responsibility to do whatever he can to correct it. His colleagues in the department say that they don't care that he dresses as a woman; they just wish he would dress like a female professor. But a secretary at the department said that the male professors are really "threatened" by Springer's choice of clothes.

He reports that the crossdressing has been hard on his son, but that it has enabled the professor to meet "more artistic women" who appreciate his costumes. Besides, wearing women's clothes has made him "a more loving man."

So what do the students think? They have been heard to say that Springer's clothes are "silly, stupid, and ugly." So there!



If Professor Springer wants to upgrade his wardrobe, he should get in touch with some guys in Broward County, Fla., where police say a "ring of transvestites" are stealing thousands of dollars worth of designer clothes police say are used for drag shows.

While they never have been caught in the act, police theorize that there are three groups operating in Florida. Last month, four men — one of whom was in drag — were arrested after police found clothing worth \$100,000 in their car that had been stopped for a traffic violation. The clothing had been taken from a store nearly three hours earlier.

The standard practice is to throw

a cement block through the window of a high-class boutique, climb inside, and grab the expensive merchandise before the police show up. Even though the stores have alarms, the few minutes it takes for the police to show up is all the time the burglars need to make off with an armful of clothes. Some boutiques have been hit several times.



The inventor of the inflatable penile implant used in some female-to-male sex reassignment surgeries died last month in a plane crash.

Dr. F. Brantly Scott, professor at the Baylor University College of Medicine and chief of urology service at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston was killed when the Quest-Air plane he had assembled from a kit crashed.

Dr. Scott invented the penile implant in the early 1970's to treat impotent men, and it has been used in more than 100,000 patients. Its use for female-to-male transsexuals provides a penis capable of erection in place of the clitoris.



A Chinese surgeon thinks that penises that work naturally are best, and so he won't cut off any more of them.

He Qinglian, a plastic surgeon at Shanghai's Changzheng hospital, said he had been deluged with demands for sex-change operations after newspapers reported his first such operation last August, demands that he must refuse. "Imagine, a man comes to me asking for help," the surgeon was quoted by the official *China Daily* as saying. "But he is a father and a husband. The children would be exposed to such prejudice if he was turned into a 'she.' Its better that he carries out his duty" as a man.

Miss Sinclair finds it harder and harder to carry out her duties without the help of people like Rita in Germany. Kindly send clippings regarding crossdressing to her at the Renaissance office. Be sure to note the date and name of publication.

For deserved recognition

Transgendered veterans asked to share part of their stories

Transgendered people, if you can forgive the sexist connotation, are like everyone else—they put their pants on one leg at a time. For many transgendered people, a part of their lives were spend putting on the pants that went with a military uniform. So, in an effort to show that its members are really representative of the larger society, the next major Renaissance outreach effort will involve military veterans.

On Veterans' Day, Nov. 11, Renaissance again hopes to have a media event saluting transgendered veterans. This was tried two years ago, but the response from transgendered veterans was so poor that the plans were canceled.

The purpose of this event will be two-fold. First, it will show that transsexuals and transvestites have made loyal and honorable contributions to the nation. Secondly, it will be our way of paying special tribute to our members who served in the military. So far as is known, no other transgendered organization has attempted to do this.

Paula Jordan Sinclair, a former Navy lieutenant commander, is coordinating the media event. She stresses that this will not be a Monty Python farce.

"We don't in any way want people

to think that we are poking fun of veterans or imply that Operation Desert Strom was won by soldiers wearing bras and panties," she said. "While many crossdressers served in the military, they kept their crossdressing a strictly personal and private affair. We hope that by sharing this information in a *very confidential* manner, the public will come to realize that transgendered people are just as patriotic, just as brave, just as responsible as other people."

She notes that in the past few years, lesbian and gay veterans have "come out of the closet" and have received generally favorable treatment from the media.

While plans are not yet complete, the event will center on veterans' own stories and achievements. However, real names and other identifying information will not be disclosed; femme names will be entirely appropriate.

Confidentiality will be strictly observed for all those desiring it.

Sinclair asks that Renaissance members and friends who have served in the military to provide her with the following information, at the minimum:

- ✓ Branch of service and dates served
- ✓ Highest rank achieved
- ✓ Medals or commendations received
- ✓ War-time action

Other information you may wish to share would be welcome.

Each person providing information will have the opportunity to review it before it is released.

"What I would like to do is be able to say that transgendered people served honorably in all branches of the military, in all armed conflicts, and that some served with distinction and achieved senior rank," Sinclair said. "I know this is true from my own contacts, but I need to have the back-up information that only individual transgendered people can provide."

A compilation of this information will be released to the public on or around Veterans' Day. While it is not necessary for all Renaissance veterans to personally participate in this event, she is interested in volunteers who may want to participate to some degree.

She stresses that Nov. 11 is drawing near, and she urges all veterans to send their information to her at the Renaissance office. If you wish to speak to her about this project, leave a message on the Renaissance phone, (215) 630-1437.

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The *For Ideas*
FORUM

What's wrong with having fun?

To the Editor:

In last month's issue, Evelyn Kirkland raised her objection to the Greater Philadelphia Chapter's lingerie party at the July monthly meeting. As the managing director of the chapter and principal promoter of the lingerie party idea, I am responding to that objection. To recap the episode in brief, our chapter had invited a lingerie distributor to put on a fashion show for the members as the featured program, and we invited the membership to attend the party in their lingerie as a summertime diversion.

The meeting and party took place on July 20, so my comments — unlike Evelyn's — are being made with the facts behind me, rather than prejudging the event. However, many of Evelyn's points were considered by the chapter board before deciding to proceed with the lingerie party. Obviously, we came to a much different conclusion as to the suitability of lingerie as a theme for the monthly program.

Evelyn's most particular charge was in accusing the board of promoting "fun" at our monthly meeting. To this indictment, I as chapter leader and the rest of the board must plead guilty. I would like to think that everyone attending any Renaissance meeting — whether in their lingerie, or fully crossdressed, or not crossdressed at all — will have an enjoyable time.

There was a method to our madness in promoting the lingerie party. The summer meetings are historically lightly attended, and we thought the party concept would be a drawing card for members who opt to skip summer meetings. There is also a constituency of crossdressers out there who are stuck at the lingerie-only level, and we thought it could be an outreach to that group.

Evelyn expressed concern that

first-time visitors or significant others would come "unglued" (her term) at the sight of a room full for lingerie-clad members. That would have been a "sticky" situation, indeed. Fortunately, everyone's mullage held firm, and no new members or significant others ran screaming from the meeting in search of rubber cement. In my meeting announcement, I made it abundantly clear for new visitors that the lingerie party was a departure from our normal mode of dress. Consider also that first-time visitors can probably more easily identify with lingerie apparel that with some of the expensive ensembles that our more experienced members usually wear to meetings. It should also be pointed out that a few significant others joined in the spirit of the party by attending in lingerie themselves.

The party was referred to as "disgusting," and Evelyn intimated our members would go beyond the bounds of good taste. I must confess that it never occurred to me that any of our members would do anything that could be construed as "disgusting." And of course, I was right. In fact, some of the lingerie

outfits were lovely and none of the outfits crossed the line of good taste. I am afraid that describing lingerie as "disgusting" says more about the speaker than it says about the lingerie itself.

One final point: Evelyn wanted the national board to quash the lingerie party. To their credit, the national board respected the autonomy of the chapter, and did not take this action. However, in hindsight, since a majority of the national board members attending the meeting in their lingerie, I wonder if their hearts would have really been in it anyway.

So why did we do it? Why did we risk our reputation as serious crossdressers to throw a frivolous lingerie party? (Remember that the party announcement went out in this nationally distributed newsletter.) Because we are strong enough to take a cliché like lingerie and have fun with it. And at all future chapter meetings, as at the previous ones, I hope we all have (here comes that dirty word again) FUN.

— Dina Amberle
Managing Director
Greater Philadelphia

'I wear street clothes publicly'

To the Editor:

This is a letter I sent to the Greater Philadelphia Chapter:

Dear Ladies,

This is in reference to the July meeting at The Woods..

While I am sure many transvestites enjoyed the opportunity to dress in their underwear publicly, I have to say that as a woman I felt put-upon, intimidated, and generally ill-at-ease with the whole affair. Is this going to be a regular feature of the meetings, or is this going to be a special event? Personally, I wear

street clothes publicly, and save the more intimate stuff for private view.

Anyone who knows me knows that I am not a prude, but I believe this does not do our image as a support and educational group any justice. I also know that several other women and significant others were not too enamored with the idea. I hope you take the feelings of some of the women in this organization into consideration the next time around.

—Jackie K.
Norristown, Pa.

The For Ideas
FORUM

Is the APA our friend or foe;

by JoAnn Roberts

Not too long ago, Elaine Edwards from the Indiana Crossdresser's Society (ICS) tested a pet theory of hers; people will believe anything they read in the gender press. She created several false stories, had them published in the ICS newsletter, and watched the stories spread from newsletter to newsletter as if they were factual. Well, I don't necessarily agree with Edward's method, but her point is very well taken. To wit...

We have within our community a few (thankfully) misguided individuals who think they are doing us all a favor by attacking the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and its *Diagnostics and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Third*

Edition-Revised (DSM).

These people charge: one, the words "transvestite" and "transsexual" are psychiatric terms, and two, the words are derogatory and defame our reputation. They even want to ban the use of "crossdresser" claiming that it has become a synonym for "transvestite." The culprits, they say, are those people who use the *DSM* as a means of oppressing us, i.e., transvestites and transsexuals are mentally ill, perverts, deviates, etc.

Well, kids, I'm here to tell you that it just ain't so. Just to make sure I didn't shoot my self in the foot, I went back to review the *DSM* myself. Here is a quote from the manual's "Introduction:"

"Neither deviant behavior, nor

conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders, unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of a dysfunction in the person..."

Did you understand the significance of that statement? The APA is saying if you feel *good* about yourself, even though you participate in a behavior that society may deem as "deviant," (statistically speaking) *you are not mentally ill!*

I'd also like to point out that nowhere in the *DSM* will you find the words "transvestite" or "transsexual." The APA has been very careful to characterize behaviors, not people. Another quote from the introduction will illustrate:

"A common misconception is that classification of mental disorders

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FORUM

is the DSM the devil's work?

classifies people, when actually what are being classified are disorders that people have. For this reason the text of the *DSM-III-R* avoids the use of such expressions as 'a schizophrenic' or 'an alcoholic'... Another misconception is that all people described as having the same mental disorder are alike in all important ways."

Now, don't take my word for it. Go to the library yourself and look it up. Then decide who knows what they're talking about.

It seems to me that the APA and the professional counseling community has been greatly misunderstood in reference to the use of the *DSM* and some people within the gender community owe them an apology.

Instead, they're girding for an all out war with the APA based on popular mythology.

The arguments proposed by these "Dona Quixotes" are logically false. They've fallen into the trap known as the *fallacy of composition* where properties of the parts are attributed to the whole. It goes something like this: Since some transvestites and transsexuals are mentally healthy, then all transvestites and transsexuals are mentally healthy.

Ironically, they accuse the APA of the same fallacy in reverse. It is impossible to logically prove that all transvestites and transsexuals are not mentally disordered. All it takes is one transvestite or transsexual to exhibit a psychological dysfunction

due to their gender identity to prove the claim false. Q.E.D.

So what's the ruckus about? The gender-warriors want the approval of the professional community for their transgendered behavior. They want their lifestyles validated by an outside agency, the APA, so they can point to a paragraph in a book and say, "See, it says here I'm not mentally ill!"

It's so sad. First, because the paragraph is already there if they'd just look for it and, second, because they think they need it at all.

The problem, of course, is not with the APA or the majority of counseling professionals, but with those people who *misuse* the infor-

(continued on page 20)

Another view on l'affaire lingerie

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

I am frankly disturbed by the bias displayed in Evelyn Kirkland's letter condemning the Greater Philadelphia Chapter for holding a lingerie party in July (*RN*, July, 91). There is no pretty word for it; the bias is heterosexist.

Simply put, not all members of Renaissance have wives and girlfriends. Furthermore, there are those of us who would not want a wife or a girlfriend. We have (or want) boyfriends or husbands. Some of us in that category identify as transsexual, others as homosexual. By accusing the chapter of a reckless disregard for the feelings of the female significant others of our members, Ms. Kirkland seems to presume that all Renaissance members fit into the mold of heterosexual crossdressers. Furthermore, she attempts to project her hang-ups on others. I don't know about the rest of you, but *my* significant

other spent most of June greatly anticipating the lingerie party, as did I.

I did not wish to follow Ms. Kirkland's lead and ignore a segment of the Renaissance family that I do not identify with, so on that torrid July night I sought out several wives and girlfriends, including the wife of a first-time visitor. None of them — even the first-time spouse — expressed the slightest revulsion about the costumes of some of the members. I wish Ms. Kirkland would have been present so she could have discovered this fact.

There remains, however, a more disturbing theme in Ms. Kirkland's letter. This is the notion of appropriate vs. inappropriate dress or behavior. Ms. Kirkland wrote about past meetings "where no one was inappropriately dressed." I'm so glad to hear that our members — up to now — have abided by her

standards. I'm not really suggesting that Ms. Kirkland is trying to impose her own code of conduct on Renaissance. Yet she does seem to be somewhat blind to the fact that Renaissance serves a diverse membership who derive all sorts of benefits from the organization. However, I am suggesting that she open her eyes to this diversity and suggest ways in which Renaissance can provide more benefits for all members and friends.

LaCage again

La Cage aux Folles, starring Gene Rayburn of game show fame, will be presented at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope from Sept. 25 to Oct. 13. No word if any local girls are appearing in the chorus line.

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The *For Ideas*
FORUM

On the freak show circuit

by Kate Bornstein

☞ *This essay was first published in the Bay Area Reporter, a newspaper serving the San Francisco lesbian and gay community, following the author's appearance on Donahue along with Veronica Brown, Paddy Aldridge, and other transsexuals and their lesbian lovers in April. Part of that show was rebroadcast in August. Reprinted with permission of the author.*

Me and Phil Donahue. Freak and sideshow barker. Not the kind of relationship my mother had in mind for me.

Growing up as a white, middle-class, heterosexual male, one of the privileges I enjoyed was being on the consumer's side of the freak show. I could go and watch the sideshow at the circus or the talk show on television, and I could be distant. I could be the "normal" one.

Now, as a transsexual lesbian, I live on the other side of that privilege. But then, most of us have been on both sides of the freak show at one time or another in our lives, yes?

It's interesting about our community — we are composed of people who, for a portion of our lives, before we come out, got to enjoy the privilege of the heterosexual culture. And after we come out, we're freaks. And as freaks, we are the curiosities of the dominate culture. They want to know who we are, because *we are fascinating*.

"Tell us about yourself," says the heterosexual culture, and we oblige. We write down our words; we paint; we take our photographs; we make our films. And when we've done this, we look around to see who exactly is looking at this stuff. And for the most part, it's other freaks like us.

The same straight folks who find us so fascinating don't buy our books

or see our movies. They don't come to our galleries in which our paintings and sculpture proudly proclaim our love. They don't buy tickets to our plays.

"Tell us about yourself," says the heterosexual culture, "but tell it to us on our own turf so that we can feel safe about hearing you and seeing you." Remember back before you came out? Remember that distance you wanted between yourself and the freaks? What better distance than a freak show.

The freak show has a long history in this country. Since the 1700s, the freak show, medicine show, or sideshow has been used as a tool of capitalism. Preying on our natural curiosity about the different, the bizarre, and the unknown, manufacturers have for several hundred years sponsored these shows with the aim of getting more people to buy their products.

Examples in the U.S.A. have been the shows of Buffalo Bill Cody, P.T. Barnum, the Ringling Bros., Ted Mack, Geraldo Rivera, and Phil Donahue. More recently, women have gotten into the act: Dr. Ruth, Oprah Winfrey, and Sally Jesse Raphael.

While the format is the same — display the freak, promote the product (this is, after all, still America), there are two differences between the talk show of today and the medicine show of the last century.

Gentility and good manners dictate that today we cannot gape and gawk at people with physical differences; that's not polite. But we need freaks in order to shore up our own normalcy. (Let's be realistic — we do this in the lesbian and gay and transgendered communities when we are racist, sexist, classist or ageist. How can we expect more from the straight world when, in their need for freaks, they pick on us — the queers?)

So the first difference seems to be the type of freak displayed. Social, not physical, freaks are in demand these days.

The second difference is the degree of power afforded the freak. In the medicine show, the freak was purely on display — often behind bars. The attraction/repulsion was physical; all that was needed was the physical presence of the freak.

Today, however, with a more social (i.e. interactive) freak, there is a need to put the *interaction* on display. Hence, the talk show. This actually affords the freak the opportunity to speak his or her mind — to present his or her world. And this, I think, ultimately reduces the freak status of the freak.

That's why I do the shows. When all is said and done, I want to be less of a freak. *But I don't want to become less of who I am in the process.*

I've done two Geraldo shows and one Donahue show. I did them because I want the world to be easier to live in *just the way I am*. Someone has to let people know that freaks like me are simply not freaks in the pejorative sense of the word. I've been given the gift of gab (and a certain enjoyment of the attention of the audience), so Katie admits her own freakdom as does Donahue.

Not what my mother had in mind for me, but I think that if more of us do Geraldo, Phil, Oprah, Sally, and the rest — I think that is more of us speak our queer voices into the heartland of heterosexuality — then we have a shot at making a difference.

☞ *The author is a post-op transsexual living in San Francisco where she is a playwright and actress. Her play Hidden: A Gender explores transgender issues in the context of a medicine show. She was one of the founders of Renaissance when she lived in Philadelphia.*

The **FORUM** For Ideas

A personal story

The beginnings of wisdom

by Laura Edwards

Until recently, crossdressing has been both exhilarating and distressing. I would feel good yet eventually sad whenever I crossdressed.

I would feel good, when, given the proper occasion, I would dress up. I would feel sad when I had to return to my male self and my sense of shame for having dressed as a woman. That was my problem: who am I? Can I ever be a whole person? Or am I meant to live forever as a dual being, part of me happy and the other part sad and ashamed? If I am to be split into two selves, which one is the real one? Or are they both equally real? If only I had the wisdom to resolve this, to find a way of life that would put an end to

incessant longings and shame.

This long, long period of constant stress has suddenly become the beginning of a personal wisdom. Through a series of events, I have begun (just begun, not completed by any means) this task of integrating my life. The result will undoubtedly take one of several possible forms: peaceful coexistence of my male and female selves; a more androgynous lifestyle allowing me to look and feel more feminine while continuing to live as a male; or perhaps a life as a woman, whether as a she-male or as a female (transsexual). The point is that one of these solutions, or perhaps a different one, will be the result of a personal wisdom that I began to gain just recently, wisdom

that may allow me to enjoy life and not dread it.


How did this "beginning" come about? It occurred when I attended my first Renaissance meeting on Nov. 17, 1991. I came as my male self. I can vividly remember that first time, seeing so many crossdressers all in one place. I was incredulous. I simply sat down and just watched everyone for the first half hour. Later, I began to mingle and talk. Everyone was so nice. Even though I was in a minority because I was in my male role, nothing negative was ever said to me. I could not get over the fact that the sense of concern and acceptance was so pervasive. How could this be? after

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The beginning of wisdom

(continued from page 13)

so many years of secretiveness and silent shame — hiding my feelings and wishes from even my wonderful wife — I suddenly felt at home, safe, accepted. I attended the Christmas party the following month and joined Renaissance in January. I should add that the Christmas party was only the second time in my entire life that I had ever appeared anywhere as a woman.

Many things have flowed out of that initial experience, all of which have added greater substance to the growth of my personal wisdom. In a nutshell, I have begun to integrate my life. For example, my wife now knows my whole story, and my marriage is even stronger for it. Our relationship has always been beautiful; now it is deepening even more. Real love always wins. But the effort to bring about such depth is not

easy. We are now seeing a gender therapist, sharing the weekly hour according to our needs at the time, sometimes together, sometimes separately.

In July, I attended a week-long workshop on sexuality. It helped me personally and professionally. I am thinking seriously of building on my professional background (a doctorate in education and human relations) to become a certified sex educator and therapist, specializing in gender issues. Personally, I have begun to accept myself more and to accept other people with various orientations and lifestyles.

I have also begun to understand more fully what sexuality is all about and how beautiful it can be in all its manifestations. I am hoping to return to the same workshop next year, but this time with my wife. We can both benefit from it, and we can

grow together, individually and as a couple.

These recent experiences (Renaissance, therapy, workshop) have brought me the just the beginning of personal wisdom. That wisdom allows me to realize that both my crossdressing and my quest for self-acceptance are equally important. In fact, the more I love myself, the more I can accept myself as I am and the more I can truly enjoy crossdressing. How I integrate crossdressing into my life as a whole is, at this point, unfinished business. But at least I know that my crossdressing is okay. It expresses a real part of me. So I am okay.

The battle I now face in terms of how I choose to appear to the world at large is not as tough as the battle I faced within myself. So I know I will solve that problem too because I have *me* to work with. It also helps that I am not alone; I am meeting other people who are also on a similar journey of self-expression, self acceptance, and peace making.

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FORUM

Hormones ahead? Proceed with caution

by Wendi D. Pierce

Recently, I saw a cartoon in *Tap-estry* that took a little while to sink in. The cartoon was a take-off on the drug addiction awareness ads running in many national publications. The original ad went something like this, "This is crack, this is your brain on crack."

This cartoon substituted Premarin for crack, and showed the brain image as flowers, rainbows, etc. At first I thought it amusing and a novel parody, but the more I thought about it, the more serious it became.

The mind and what it perceives govern our lives. We as members of the "gender community" have decided to explore our minds and likewise our inner desires. In many cases we are able to express that "inner-self" publicly. We have allowed our inner-self to come out into the light of day, to be expressed openly and we are "on a grow," as a good friend of mine puts it.

However, we need to be clear headed and rational in this exploration of our inner self. We need to be

able to evaluate ourselves clearly and choose the right path at each and every fork in the road, lest we wake up some day realizing that where we are is not the place we started out heading toward. Worse yet, we may have no way to go back.

Everyone knows the physical effects which hormones produce. However, a powerful influence which may not be apparent to some is the effect of hormones on our mind. Most people do not realize that these chemicals have dramatic effect on our mind as well as on our bodies. If you want proof, just ask any "natural" woman how her mood, attitudes, and ability to function varies at times due to her natural cycle. In the case of a person on large doses of hormones being used to cause a gender change, combined with the natural hormones present of the person's original gender, one may end up with a mental state the equivalent of a bottle of nitroglycerin ready to blow up at the slightest jarring.

For those who choose to experi-

ment with hormones in a non-controlled environment, the situation is extremely dangerous. Supervision is the key; not just physical supervision, which is usually provided by a family doctor or an endocrinologist, but psychological supervision by a professional who is trained in "gender therapy," who is keenly aware of the mind altering properties of these drugs, and who is trained to observe subtle attitude shifts. One needs this kind of care to prevent the worst from happening. It would be horrible to wake up one day and realize that during a "long sleep" we have mutilated our body, lost the support of our family, are broke and without a job, and are on the verge of suicide.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not negative on hormones. I feel that they can perform nothing short of a miracle to modify one's physical and mental being, thereby correcting what I feel is a major birth defect. But the key is to use these chemicals in a controlled environment.

(continued on page 17)

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Book review

The story of a Native American who crossed the gender line

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Walter L. Williams' *The Spirit and the Flesh* familiarized readers with the sexual diversity in Native American culture, especially the tradition of the *berdache*, men who dressed as woman and who played a unique social and spiritual roles in the life of their tribes.

Now, a new book takes a close look at one of these special individuals - We'wha, the famous *ihamana* of the Zuni tribe of the American Southwest.

"*The Zuni Man-Woman* (by Will Roscoe) is emerging as one of the most popular books we have ever published, and could become a national bestseller," said Peter Moulson, marketing director of the University of New Mexico Press. Shortly after the book's release last month, it was reviewed by *The New York Times Review of Books*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and National Public Radio.

We'wha's story touches on many disciplines: anthropology, sociology, history, and psychology. Many Native American tribes had the tradition of the *berdache* (the word is actually a French term with strong homosexual overtones used by early explorers to explain the phenomenon), but We'wha's life is

especially well documented.

Anthropologist Matilda Coxe Stevenson spent many years in the late 19th century among the Zuni tribe, and studied We'wha closely. For several years, she believed him to be a woman primarily because he dressed as a woman and was referred to with female pronouns. In 1885, We'wha spent six months in Washington, D.C. where she traveled in the finest circles, and became a favorite of Speaker of the House John Carlisle and President Grover Cleveland.

The book is also humorous, according to Moulson. "Here you have a man well over six feet tall wearing womens clothing and no one, not President Cleveland, not even Matilda Stevenson, knew," he said. "They couldn't imagine beyond their stereotypes - someone who wore women's clothing and weaved couldn't possibly be anything but a woman."

Because of her perceived gender, We'wha used women's restrooms when she was in Washington. Upon her return to her tribe, she declared the white women were all frauds; she had seen them without their dentures, wigs, and falsies!

Stevenson reports that when We'wha died of heart disease in

1896, "it was a death which caused universal regret and distress in Zuni."

"We'wha's death was regarded as a calamity, and the remains lay in state for an hour or more, during which time not only members of the clans to which she was allied, but the rain priests and theurgists and many others, including children, viewed them. When the blanket was finally closed, a fresh outburst of grief was heard," Stevenson recorded.

For a variety of reasons, the *ihamana* tradition has faded among the Zuni, but We'wha is still regarded reverently as a cultural heroine by her own people and by members of other tribes as well. A contingent of lesbian and gay Native Americans carried a banner saluting her in New York's Gay Pride parade in June. However, her unique story is unknown to many others. Probably the greatest significance of *The Zuni Man-Woman* will be to make the *berdache* tradition less threatening and more interesting to a curious straight population. Certainly, it will reaffirm to We'wha's spiritual kin in the gender community today the naturalness of crossing the gender line.

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Hormones ahead?

(continued from page 15)

A good friend of mine related to me how he (she) was on a rocket ship for about six months. At the beginning of the period, she began a program of hormone treatment wanting to become more feminine "to see how it felt." After about four months on a fairly high dosage program (5 to 7 mg. per day), she was seriously contemplating a trip to Colorado for reassignment surgery. Within a

month after she stopped treatment, she was still positive about being able to express her internal "second self," but surgery was no longer an immediate goal. She may someday have surgery, but she has decided for now that the immediate gains would not be worth the price which must be paid, i.e. the loss of family and career.

For others, hormones and the effect on their minds has meant the

opposite. The effect seems to have been to allow these people to more clearly see how comfortable they are in their new, chosen gender. After hormone treatment, their path became clear, and the internal conflict which had been a life-long strife was resolved.

Hormone therapy can both resolve and create problems, and should be administered with this in mind. In most cases, I would advise that the person discontinue use for a period after the initial effects have begun to take hold. This will allow for the "hormone high" to subside and will give the person time to reevaluate where they want to go.

A period of a month or so won't hurt any desired long term progress, and it will give the person's mind a chance to return to their pre-hormone thought patterns. Therapy during this period is very important, and an in-depth consultation should precede the continuance of hormone therapy.

Questions such as "what am I gaining and what am I giving up" should be asked. If the answers are not conclusive, then continuance of hormone therapy should be postponed until some point of resolution of these questions is possible. If hormone therapy is reinstated at this time, it may conceal the true inner self, and the replies may reflect the person's "hormone high."

Successful "gender therapy" is the desired result, and proper application of methods and therapy (including hormone therapy) are the tools. These tools should be used under the close supervision of a trained gender therapist. If the methodology described here is followed, I feel that the person has a better chance of attaining a true peace and contentment with the true inner self.

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BONNET HILL, TASMANIA - No, not that Toni, Tony, Tone, this Toni...

My good friend **Toni Mitchell**, from way down under, sent me a tidbit about three novels that may be of interest to our readers.

The first novel she mentions is *Orlando* by **Virginia Woolf** (1928). Although I've heard of this book, neither Toni nor I can give you the plot line. Suffice it to say it deals with dual sexuality.

The second novel is *The Twyborn Affair* by **Patrick White** (1979). The book starts in France in 1914, migrates to Australia and concludes in London 25 years later. The main character begins as Eudoxia, the consort of an elderly Greek, then transforms to Eddie, a hired hand in the Outback, then transforms finally into Edith, a flamboyant madam. The book explores metamorphoses and the duality of the human condition.

The last book mentioned is set in a future New York City. The main character, a young man named Evelyn, suffers the fate of Tiresias of Greek lore and is transformed into a woman. **Angela Carter**, who is one of Britain's most original and disturbing writers, penned *The Passion of New Eve* in 1977.

All three books are still in print according to Mitchell.

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LONDON, U.K. - Badges! We don't need no badges...

From across the "pond" comes word from **Miss Kelly** that friend, **Dawn Redwood** (I wonder if she's related to our Randy of the-) is collecting sew-on patches for her skirt. Redwood is looking for unusual, weird, lewd, and silly badges. Got one? Send it to Dawn at Aardverx, 31 Mountearl Gardens, London, SW16-2NL.

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BELTON, MO. - Mo' better groups... I received a nice letter from **Jennifer** who is working with other

Tri-Ess sisters to get **Kappa Gamma Mu** underway here in the suburbs of Kansas City. She said that **Crossdresser's and Friends**, the open group in the area, did not serve her needs and thus she turned to Tri-Ess for help.

Anyone else who may be interested in KGM can write P.O. Box 98, Belton, MO 64012-0098.

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CINCINNATI, OH. - First you say you do and the you don't. Then you say you will and then you won't...

Okay! Enough is enough! The June *IXΣ Newsletter* carried an article called *A Three Dollar Sex Change*, by IXΣ member **Dana**. The article "detailed" how Dana got her gender changed on her driver's license from "M" to "F." Given the context of that newsletter issue and the way the piece was written, it could be regarded as another of IXΣ's silly stories.

So, the July issue of *InnerView* arrives from **Cross-Port** with the same story. Or is it? The article has a trailer note from Dana that says,

"If you get the *IXΣ Newsletter*, you will notice that the June issue contains an article entitled 'Three Dollar Sex Change' that is different than the version which appears here. As this article is an absolutely TRUE story, and because we...send a monthly issue to our local police representative...we did not want her to 'plug' this really neat loophole in our state licensing system. We thought we could 'change it a little' to make it sound 'untrue.' I gave Shannon (IXΣ editor) full editing rights to change the 'true' article..."

I smell a MONA here. Let's declare the IXΣ newsletter the *Mad Magazine* of the gender set.

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WALTHAM, MASS. - *Honi soit qui mal y pense...*

That means, "Woe to him who thinks ill of it." So, what the hell am I talking about? Why, Merissa's

reassignment surgery. You didn't know? I thought everyone knew. After all, **Merissa Sherrill Lynn** detailed her reasons for having the surgery in *Tapestry* #58.

I think it is a shame that Lynn felt she had to defend her decision. Apparently, she received a lot of negative feedback ranging from, "We disagree... but we support you," to "Your soul will rot in Hell."

Actually, it's nobody's damn business but Lynn's. Her decision is a personal one; the consequences of her action does not affect the community at large nor the **International Foundation for Gender Education**, in particular.

As for the labels we tend to apply, Lynn says, significantly, "You can call yourself a 'ripe banana' for all I care. What you call yourself isn't important. What is important is whether or not you can acknowledge that you are the architect of your being and you are responsible for your actions... and be able to cope with the consequences."

Lynn has achieved a personal goal she set for herself and that alone is praise-worthy. So, Merissa, damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead. There's still work to be done.

By the way, the French phrase is the motto of the British Order of the Garter.

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TRENTON, N.J. - The news of my death has been greatly exaggerated...

Not only did I get egg on my face after reporting the untimely demise of **Sigma Nu Rho Tri-Ess**, but they surprised the hell out of me with the latest edition of their newsletter.

Bear in mind that Tri-Ess, in the past, has been the crossdressing bastion, to a fault in many instances, of heterosexuality. That all seems to be changing and the ENP news is a good example. It provided coverage of several gay issue related

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JoAnn Roberts

stories, including the attempt by the Presbyterian church to relax its ban on ordaining gay ministers and an article stating that most New Jerseyans support civil rights for homosexuals.

ENP president and editor, **Donna Marie Grove**, stated, "I know that we are an organization for heterosexual crossdressers only, but I felt that it was very important to include articles about what has been happening in the gay community. I also wanted you to read what can be done if we organize and band together to fight for our rights.

"I feel it's time for leaders of ALL... groups to have a national summit meeting to draw a battle plan to lobby our cause to legislators on state and national levels."

Well said.

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JACKSON, N.J. - You can't please all the people all of the time...

For those of you who just can't seem to get enough dressing stuffed into one month, here's news of yet another venue. **Joan Furkey** and **Amanda Bronsky** are opening their home here to any transgendered person on the second Saturday of each month.

The idea is, as they put it, "BSing over coffee, soda and tons of munchies." They'll also have a "genuine" Avon Lady attending and they plan a 50-50 drawing (tickets \$2 each) to finance the gathering. The group, which has no name, does have three rules: no booze, no drugs, no sex. Can't argue that.

Furkey and Bronsky are starting this get-together because they find their regular support group meeting format "boring" and they feel that socializing is "the most effective form of therapy among the transgendered community." Wonder where they got their degrees in creative therapy?

If you're interested in attending, write for directions and schedule to

Joan or Amanda at 22 Vermont Ave., Jackson, NJ 08527

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SEATTLE, WASH. - Gone but never to be forgotten...

It was June of 1983 when three people gathered to found the **Emerald City** support group, **Lynette**, **Wendi**, and **Janice Van Cleve**. Lynette dropped out early, Wendi left in '84, and, now, after eight years, Van Cleve is leaving too. It is time, she feels, to move on with her life. Van Cleve transitioned to full-time cross-living last year.

In parting she says, "The goal is not pleasure, nor happiness, nor acceptance, nor power, nor surgery, nor sex. The goal is the process itself—the process of becoming human — the process of learning to be alive. Many people set more tangible goals and do achieve them; just look at all the dead people around you."

So long Janice and good luck. Wherever you go and whatever you do, I know that you'll do it with dignity, respect, and class.

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SAN ANTONIO, TEX. - They're changing offices as often as their undies...

I think this is the final change in the **Boulton & Park** board of directors: president, **Tere Frederickson**; vice-president, **Denise M.**; secretary, **Linda Phillips**; treasurer, **Ginny D.** Congratulations to all on their election to office.

On a different front; if you were interested in learning the theory behind the electronic fuel injection system in your car, would you go ask a psychologist or sociologist? No? Then why would anyone expect a retired auto mechanic (Linda Phillips) to be an expert on the development of transgendered behavior? One wouldn't, but that hasn't stopped Phillips and Frederickson from publishing their own theory of transgender behavior. Reminds me of **Immanuel**

Velikofsky all over again.

Their treatise would make for humorous reading if weren't that they're serious. Both Phillips and Frederickson discredit the professional community and their new theory is supposed to explain all transgendered behavior in a new light. While Phillips and Frederickson may have dreams of becoming the **Watson and Crick** of the transgendered world, that kudo is safe for the time being. Without credentials, formal training, or any empirical data, it seems highly unlikely that any legitimate, refereed journal would accept their paper for publication.

If you'd like a much more balanced view on the development of sexual and gender identities, check out *Brain Sex* by **Anne Moir** and **David Jessel**, Lyle Stuart publishing, 1991, ISBN 0-8184-0543-0.

The book reviews the recent discoveries of sexual dimorphism of the human brain. Here's a taste:

"This book addresses itself to the brain-derived differences between the two sexes; in fact, assessed on brain sex and behavior rather than on simple anatomy, there are many more sexes than the traditional two. And the evidence now points overwhelmingly to the conclusion that sexual deviance is as much a product of biology—as much a product of nature—as the orthodox sexuality which society accepts today.

"We make no value judgments on sexual 'deviancy', the word itself may seem to imply disapproval, but we use it in a statistical sense, because it seems pointless to judge the outcome of a biological process in moral terms. It would be equally absurd to disapprove of the fact that tadpoles turn into frogs."

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NOTA BENE - The opinions expressed here are mine and mine alone. If you have a comment, positive or negative, write me at PO Box 1263, KofP, PA 19406.

Is the APA our friend or foe?

(continued from page 11)

mation in the *DSM*. I'm sure there is a lawyer, somewhere, who used the *DSM* as a weapon in a divorce proceeding against a transvestite. Somewhere is an employer who used the *DSM* to label a transsexual as mentally unstable and fire them.

The "enemy" is not the APA or the *DSM*. The enemy is that segment of society that is ignorant about transgendered behavior and who improperly back up their ignorance with the *DSM*.

My daddy used to say, "Ignorance is temporary. Stupid is forever." Ignorance is cured with education. Those who ignore the facts and refuse to be educated are not ignorant; they're just plain stupid. Don't be suckered into believing everything you read in these newsletters. Do some research on

your own.

I don't need the APA to tell me I'm not mentally disordered. I've known that for quite some time now.

I'm going to put my efforts into

Transsexual inmates

(continued from page 1)

He ordered state corrections department authorities to develop medical and psychological policies to deal with transsexual inmates so cases like Belcher's can be handled as a matter of course within the state's prison medical facilities.

Belcher, who is serving a life sentence for kidnapping with special circumstances, had been undergoing hormone treatments before she was sentenced in 1989. She also had received breast implants. Officials at the Vacaville prison, northeast of San Francisco, refused to continue

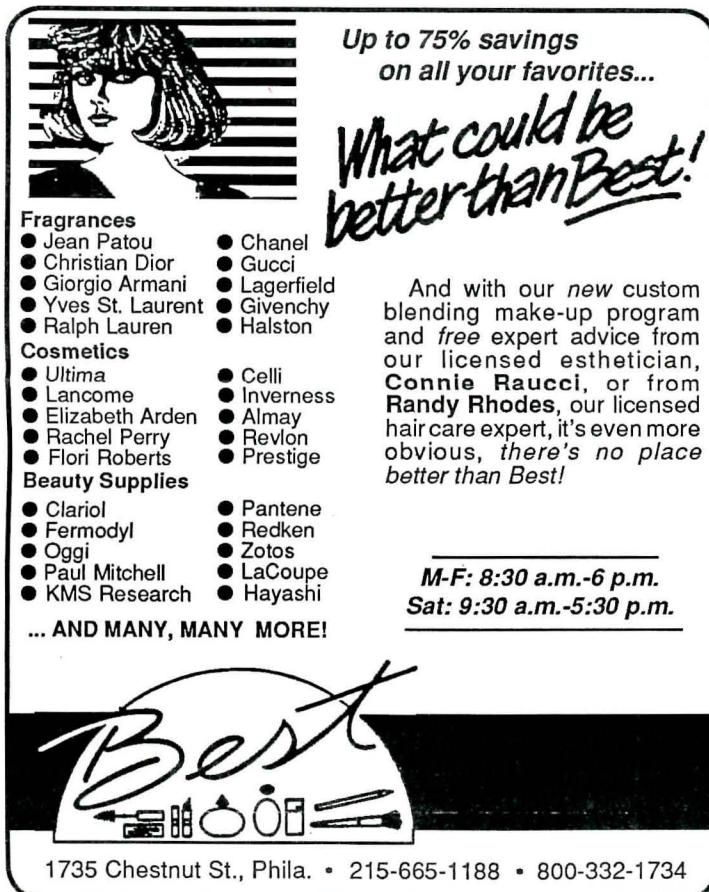
educating the general public where most of the ignorance lies and I'll continue to work *with* the professionals to foster communication, not generate confrontation.

her hormone treatments, Belcher charged, because transsexuals "don't fit in their macho society."

Belcher had filed a complaint against the officials, claiming that the lack of female hormones was causing her extreme anxiety and bouts of depression.

Physicians in the prison medical facility said they were reluctant to prescribe hormones because of their concern over long-term health problems, possibly including cancer.

Moulds did order a complete medical and psychiatric evaluation for Belcher.



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