The Femme Mirror

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The Femme Mirror

The Femme Mirror is the quarterly journal of The Society for the Second Self, Inc., a non-profit 501c(3) corporation. Address: The Society for the Second Self, Inc., 8880 Bellaire B2 Ste.104, Houston TX 77036. Submissions to The Femme Mirror should be sent to: **The Femme Mirror, 8880 Bellaire B2 Suite 104, Houston, TX 77036**. Letters to the Editor may be directed to Frances Fairfax in care of ***The Femme Mirror.***

Submissions of letters, manuscripts, photographs and art work implies the right of the Editor to edit and publish the material. True names and street addresses will not be published unless the Editor is specifically instructed by the author to do so. **Submission of materials on computer disks is encouraged. We are able to accept macintosh, ms-dos and windows formatted material, both 3.5" diskettes and 5.25" floppies.** ASCII text files preferred. When preparing text files, please strip all hard carriage returns and line feed commands from MS-DOS generated documents. Add one hard carriage return between paragraphs. We use PageMaker 6.1 to design pages, do all the formatting, and prepare the material for camera ready prints on PC DeskTop Publishing system. **Files may also be sent by email to: JEFTRIS@aol.com.** Articles are available to other transgender community publications on magnetic media if requested by specific article and issue. From time to time ***The Femme Mirror*** is asked for permission to reprint our articles in other community publications. If you do not wish to be published elsewhere, please so indicate when you submit your material.

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1. ***The Femme Mirror*** will not publish the last name of any Tri-Ess member without the expressed written consent of the member, unless the surname is known to be a pseudonym.
2. We encourage all contributors to the Mirror to adopt a pseudonym when submitting articles and letters for publication. We request that you place the surname in quotation marks so that we will know it is a pseudonym.
3. We request that each contributor include her Tri-Ess number on all material.
4. Contributors should avoid use of true last names in letters or articles, and particularly in accounts of chapter activities and other events. We reserve the right to edit such material to remove surnames or other potentially compromising information.

Please help us to serve you in a professional manner.

Thank you, Frances Fairfax

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Are You Moving?

Please Notify Membership Director
Donna Martin
P.O. Box 597859
Chicago, IL 60659

A Note of Thanks

A note of thanks from your Mirror Staff to all of you who contribute your articles, photos, cartoons, poems, as well as your typing and envelope-stuffing skills. Your service is enriching the lives of all your sisters. This is YOUR journal. You, the readers, are the source of its contents and the reason for its existence. Ya'll are doing GREAT! Just keep it coming now, hear?

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Executive Director's Message

By Carol Beecroft

Many of our readers know that from time to time I, along with Marlene, take a number of boxes of materials relating to crossdressing to the Special Collections section at California State University at Northridge. The Bullough Collection is probably the largest collection in the USA dealing with sex. As a part of this collection we find a huge amount of material devoted to crossdressing. The boxes of materials we take to Cal. State Northridge go into this latter collection.

In addition, I have donated three scrapbooks showing many pictures of crossdressers, and I am now preparing a contribution of video tapes involving my own television appearances where I discussed crossdressing.

Unfortunately, I have either loaned out certain video tapes and not had them returned, or my copies were defective. Since many of our Tri-Ess members (and others) have copies of these television appearances, I am asking if any of our sisters have copies of the following: "Real Life Tootsie" and "Eros America." I will gladly pay for the copying of any tapes sent to me.

Now, on to my regular column. From the early 70's I have believed that the reason for the crossdressing of a number of males (not all) was due to biological factors. I had nothing to back up by hunches, but over the years I have read books by Brierly, Money, Bullough and others, which have helped me to formulate a hypothesis regarding the reason for crossdressing by many men.

I now realize that there are a number of avenues into crossdressing. I compare these avenues to the spokes of a wheel, all ending at the hub. I believe that one of these "spokes" should be labeled "biological." My reasoning for considering a biological approach to "why" we crossdress is that there are too many males "doing it" for the condition to be pure chance. I've seen figures estimating that between 4% and 15% of all males are in some way involved with this phenomenon. That's too many for simple coincidence!

It seems that my own personal experience and observations have located lots of crossdressers, people you would not have thought to be interested in wearing women's clothing. In the case of my own family, my maternal grandfather was a crossdresser, as was my oldest brother. I can also remember in the early 50's when I actually listened intently to a conversation by several men who were talking about their "dressing." One fellow was telling the others about his large wardrobe of women's clothing, and when they noted my interest in what they were saying, they abruptly terminated their conversation.

I've heard all the arguments supporting various theories of "why" we need to dress. They have ranged from little boys being punished by dressing them in girls' clothing, to boys taking clothing items from the laundry hamper and trying them on, to various psychological theories. However, the hundreds of crossdressers with whom I have talked over the years have not supported any of the above theories.

What first caused me to believe that a biological hypothesis was correct was when I read Dr. John Money's discussion of a study dealing with "tomboys." Now, I'm not talking about women who generally engage in sports, even though many of them refer to themselves as "tomboys." The "tomboys" Dr. Money investigated were VERY masculine-type females. THESE females could play ball as well, if not better, than many of the boys on the same teams. They were good - and very masculine.

If you will remember that sex and gender are NOT the same, you will understand that in the above "tomboys," it was not sex that we would be concerned with. These particular "tomboys" were heterosexual. In the case of "sex" we can say that these "tomboys" were females. But in the case of gender, they were very masculine - very!! Money says that this gender part of the "tomboys" was created IN UTERO (in the womb). At least the blueprint was laid down for a very masculine behavior to be displayed later in their lives. When I read that their GENDER (not sex) was changed in utero, I almost immediately thought: "If

a female could have her gender changed in utero, couldn't a male have his gender (masculine) changed towards a feminine gender while the fetus was developing?" I wrote to Dr. Money and he replied that my hypothesis was a good one.

At this time I should mention that the cause of the gender change in utero for these "tomboys" was due to what they call "andrenogenital condition." What apparently happened in these cases is that the mothers' adrenals produced a substance similar to the male hormone. This hormone eventually reached the female fetuses' brains and masculinized their brains. I doubt that any kind of a similar situation occurred with us, but I merely want to point out how a brain's gender template could be converted from a feminine to a masculine one. This is all done in utero!

With the above knowledge and with additional information gleaned from other writings of Money and others, I suggest the following as a hypothesis:

Starting with the fetus, in the womb, the brain develops in the direction of femininity. It is almost automatic with the mother, with only "X" chromosomes, to have a fetus with a feminine-type brain. If the father's chromosomes contribute an additional "X" chromosome, the body stays female and the brain will be feminine. However, if the male contributes a "Y" chromosome, the fetus will develop as a male.

All well and good. Do note that it seems to be a "given" that without a "Y" chromosome we will get a female with a feminine brain. But what happens if you have a male fetus with a feminine-type brain? Something has to happen to change the feminine brain into a masculine-type brain! How does this happen? Between the 6th and 8th weeks of pregnancy of a male fetus, the gonads of the male fetus produce a large amount of the male hormone, and this hormone eventually ends up in the (feminine) brain. And, as Money says, the male hormone effectively de-feminizes the feminine brain into a masculine type. Then you have a male fetus with a masculine brain. This is better for the male body.

But how does this information contribute towards an understanding of why some males will feel the need to crossdress some years after birth? I digress to mention that 30% of crossdressers have been dressing before the age of six years. The late Dr. Bonnie Bullough learned this in her recent study of crossdressers. Many crossdressers will happily tell you that they have been dressing from as early as three or four years of age. This is certainly true in my own case. What causes so many crossdressers to start dressing at such a young age? Could the reason be biological in nature?

Back to our discussion: I hypothesize that what happens in utero in a number of future crossdressers is that there was a failure to completely de-feminize the feminine brain in the above individuals. Thus we have basically masculine brains, but with a STRONG feminine side due to this lack of a complete de-feminization of the brain.

The reason for the failure of the male hormones to completely de-feminize the originally feminine brain was perhaps due to the receptors in the brain not fully responding to the male hormones. In a few cases there is NO de-feminization, and you end up with a male saying he that he is a woman trapped in a male body - a transsexual. I suggest that in many cases you have incomplete de-feminization and you end up with a strong passion to dress in women's clothing to satisfy the feminine cravings for expression. Perhaps many of those 30% of crossdressing children who started dressing before the age of six have a brain that has been only partially de-feminized. And perhaps many young crossdressers who got involved with the phenomenon at a later age might also have strong feminine sides, but less so than those who started at a very early age.

I can say that I have talked to at least three experts in the field of crossdressing who agree that my hypothesis makes sense. I don't claim 100% accuracy, but I do believe that it is the best hypothesis given for the reason we need to crossdress.

Got A Question About Your Tri-Ess Membership, Publications, Or Programs? Here's How to Get Answers by E-mail. You might appreciate knowing the e-mail addresses of various Tri-Ess officers with whom you might wish to make contact for certain needs.

1) Questions about membership fees or membership status, or notifications of change of address, go to Membership Director Donna Martin at **DJMTRIS@aol.com**
2) Questions about the Big Sister Program or the Mail Forwarding Service go to Marlene at **TriChi1@aol.com**
3) Questions about *SPICE*, or wives' and partners' or couples' support, go to Peggy Rudd at **melpeg@phoenix.net**
4) Questions having to do with chapters go to Director of Chapter Networking and Support, Judy Daniels, at **judytriess@angelfire.com**
5) Anything having to do with the crossdressers' online forum, CDTRIESS, goes to Sofronia Anne Strong, its Moderator, at **sas@tri-ess.com**
6) Anything having to do with the spouses' online forum, CDSO, goes to Bev Early, its Moderator, at **CDSO@hotmail.com**
7) Anything having to do with *The Sweetheart Connection* goes to Onnalee, its Editor, at **spice@tri-ess.com**
8) Questions about the *Membership Directory* should be addressed to Denise Peters at **chitriess@aol.com**
9) Questions and comments about the *The Femme Mirror* and materials for publication should be sent to Frances Fairfax, its Editor, at **JEFTRIS@aol.com**
10) Requests for information on joining Tri-Ess, questions about the Holiday En Femme, Tri-Ess Outreach or the workings of Tri-Ess, plus those you are not sure how to direct, should be sent to me at **TRIESSINFO@aol.com**

We and the rest of the Tri-Ess Staff are here to help you get the most out of your Tri-Ess membership. Help us to better serve you by routing questions to the correct department. The only "stupid" question is the one not asked.

Femme Mirror Product News

In each issue we will try to bring you a review of new and unique products and services of interest to crossdressers. Readers' contributions are welcome.

1999 TV Calendar Girl

This calendar you can use now and you will want to keep the pictures for years to come. The "Hollywood TV's 1999" twelve month calendar is produced by Miss March, Gina Lance, a model, actress, co-hostess and producer of TVTV in Los Angeles. Gina, originally from upstate New York, is also the marketing director of The Jim Bridges Catalog.

The birthday of every famous, beautiful woman (and Ed Wood, Jr.) is unobtrusively shown on the large date squares. All the TV models are attractively dressed, beautifully posed and photographed in great traditional pinup style on 12"X12" heavy, glossy paper stock suitable for framing. You will love the cleverly chosen, appropriate seasonal attire and props. Cover price $19.95.

For information, contact: Gina Lance, Calendar Girl, PO Box 4915, North Hollywood, CA 91617-1915. Tel: 818-752-PNUP (752-7687), Fax: 818-755-7942, E-Mail: glance@pacbell.net. Order on the Internet at: http://www.shee.net/calendargirl.

Breast Forms

"Bosom Buddy" breast forms are quite unique in that the form is filled with smaller "pillows" that can be added or removed to obtain the exact size, shape and weight desired. Their customer service personnel are polite, helpful, and understanding, and the prices are very reasonable.

There are three basic sizes: AAA-AA, A-D, DD-DDD. There are extra weighted "pillows," unweighted pillows, and several shapes of contour fillers for underarm and bra strap shoulder areas, if needed.

Now, "Bosom Buddy" joins the World Wide Web. You can write for "Bosom Buddy" information: B&B Company, Inc., PO Box 5731, Boise ID 83705-0731; or call them, 800-262-2789; and now get complete information at: http://www.bosombuddy.com

Fashion Magazine Not For Big Girls Only

MODE, originally bimonthly, is now a full size monthly magazine featuring fashions and articles for women (sizes 14W+) who have "outgrown" Vogue, Cosmo and Harper's Bazaar. MODE is all color and the format is similar to the fashion publications for smaller sisters. You will be amazed at the number and quality of the ads featuring beautiful designs in everything from lingerie to career wear, weekend casual apparel and special occasion fashions. The fashion articles, beauty tips and photographs are professionally done. Available at newsstands, or save 49% off the cover price ($2.95) by sending your name and address and $18.00 to MODE, PO Box 54275, Boulder CO 80323-4275; Credit Card subscriptions: Tel: 1888-6633, or E-Mail: modemag@aol.com

Real Women (From the Internet)

There are many women out there who have based their lives on trying to look like supermodels. They spend thousands of hours dieting and millions of dollars in plastic surgery. Recently we are seeing girls as young as 14 begging for breast implants, nose jobs, and liposuction! But did you know....?

1. If shop mannequins were real women, THEY'D BE TOO THIN TO MENSTRUATE.
2. There are 3 billion women who don't look like supermodels and ONLY 8 WHO DO.
3. Marilyn Monroe wore a SIZE 12. And her proportions by today's standards would be about a SIZE 16.
4. If Barbie were a real woman, she'd have to walk on all fours due to her proportions.
5. The average American woman weighs 144 lbs. and wears between a size 12 and 14.
6. One out of every 4 college aged women has an eating disorder.
7. The models in the magazines are airbrushed-THEY'RE NOT PERFECT!!
8. A psychological study in 1995 found that 3 minutes spent looking at models in a fashion magazine caused 70% of women to feel depressed, guilty and shameful.
9. Models who twenty years ago weighed 8% less than the average woman, today weigh 23% less.

Please send this to every woman you know. There is no sense in our generation of women and future generations of women killing themselves to look thin. We're simply being lied to. Love yourself for WHO you are, not what you look like.

90 Day "Window" Open Now to Lobby for Inclusion of Transgendered Persons under the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) — Act Now!

by Phyllis Randolph Frye

I have concluded that a ninety day "window of opportunity" has presented itself wherein some concentrated actions by lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and supportive straights can get transgenders into the next Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that will be represented to the newly elected Congress sometime in the spring of 1999.

If I may, please allow me to explain the concentrated actions and the reasons why I have reached this conclusion.

THE CONCENTRATED ACTIONS

1. A simple one-page letter, two pages max, neatly handwritten or typed, and mailed to the following two people, with copies to whomever else you choose.

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
Senator from Massachusetts
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4543

The Honorable Barney Frank
Representative from Massachusetts - 4th District
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510
202-225-5931

Plus a courteous, follow-up, phone call made two weeks after the letter is mailed. What to write and call about?

- Tell them that you are either transgendered or a masculine appearing lesbian or an effeminate appearing gay man or friend or family member of these people.
- Tell them what your bad employment experiences or bad employment fears are.
- Tell them why leaving transgenders out of the past ENDA Bills and the next ENDA Bill will leave transgenders, masculine appearing lesbians and effeminate appearing gay men OUTSIDE of the legal protections sought by ENDA.
- Ask them, beg them, to include "gender identification" or "transgenders" (which along with either "sexual orientation" or "lesbian, gay and bisexual" will FINALLY COVER the masculine appearing lesbians and effeminate appearing gay men) in the ENDA Bill that they will introduce sometime after the end of January 1999.

If you are an MTF, DO NOT, DO NOT, DO NOT send photos of yourself in a mini skirt or nightgown. DO NOT e-mail or fax—these people can be our friends: let us not anger them by flooding their e-mail or fax. DO NOT be rude or ugly. DO NOT go over two pages, try hard to keep it at one page. DO NOT THREATEN THEM!!! DO NOT tell them that you are a citizen and a taxpayer— they assume that. DO NOT say that you hope the letter gets by their staff— that is also rude. DO NOT apologize for taking their time—if you are concise and focused, they will be glad you wrote and called.

DO be concise and focused. That means **do not send the first or second draft** — take the time to boil it down to the fourth or fifth draft.

DO make sure that it is legible. DO identify yourself by state and congressional district (or town) and send a copy to your Senators and Representative if you wish.

2. If you live in Massachusetts, do the above PLUS

Contact the local and state LGBT organizations and work with them to convince both Senator Kennedy and Representative Frank that they should include "gender identification" or "transgenders" (which along with either "sexual orientation" or "lesbian, gay and bisexual" will FINALLY COVER the masculine appearing lesbians and effeminate appearing gay men) in the ENDA Bill that they will introduce sometime after the end of January 1999.

3. All of this must be done before the end of January 1999.

4. Re-read #3.

The Reasons Why I Have Reached This Conclusion:

1. The timing is obvious. Although many incumbents will remain in both Houses of Congress, by law it will be a new Congress and can consider only NEW bills. Bills like the current ENDA that are remaining from the previous 1997-1998 session, must be reintroduced—even if word for word—and given their own numbers and places in the order of the NEW Congress.

2. My experience with the Employment Non-Discrimination Act goes to July 1994. For some of you, this may be review, but for other readers it may be new. So, in short, I will restate the history.

In July 1994, Karen Kerin of Vermont and myself from Texas, both representing the Transgender Law Conference (aka ICTLEP) arrived in Washington DC in an attempt to testify before a Senate hearing on the need of including transgenders into the transgender-less 1993-1994 ENDA Bill. It was then that we learned that "the coalition", headed on this issue primarily by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and including many influential organizations, such as Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and the National Organization for Women (NOW), had knowingly decided to exclude transgenders from the 1993-1994 ENDA Bill. Later that year, Sharon Stuart, Melinda Whiteway, JoAnna McNamara and I (all again representing ICTLEP) learned at the 1994 Lavender Law Conference in Portland Oregon, that "the coalition" had concluded that transgender inclusion in ENDA would

cost them about 30 votes. So for about 30 votes (or 30 pieces of silver, whatever) transgenders were betrayed.

The next time we were in DC was the Spring of 1995 when Karen Kerin and spouse, myself and spouse, Jane Fee and Riki Wilchins came to Washington DC to lobby those Senators and Representative from our states (Vermont, Texas, Minnesota and New York) on transgender issues and on transgender inclusion in ENDA. Two months later in June 1995, a transgender-less ENDA was introduced to the new 1995-1996 Congress. It was perceived that transgenders had been deliberately deceived by "the coalition", headed on this issue by HRC, and the transgender war with the Human Rights Campaign began.

Following this came the October 1995 event when Riki, Karen and I placed over 100 transgenders and supporters from 35 states into the Halls of Congress for education on transgender issues. Since that time, and without the details being necessary, transgenders have been organized and on "the Hill" numerous times to educate the Members of Congress on transgender issues and on the need for being included in the ENDA Bill. And since that time, many meetings have been held between transgender leaders and the HRC, and transgenders have picketed HRC fundraisers. Even so, in the spring of 1997, another transgender-less ENDA was introduced to the new 1997-1998 Congress. In the spring of 1999, another transgender-less ENDA will be introduced to the new 1999-2000 Congress UNLESS SOMETHING CHANGES.

3. So, what do we change? How do we motivate "the coalition" to ask for a transgender-inclusive ENDA in the spring of 1999?

Note that "the coalition" has changed. For one, PFLAG is now transgender inclusive in its by-laws and mission statement. For two, NOW is now transgender inclusive in its activities and voted so in an annual convention two years ago. For still another, other organizations of "the coalition" have heard more about transgender since Karen and I first started poking at the problem in 1994. Also, with the exception of HRC, almost every national queer rights organization is now LGBT either in name or in bylaws. And although HRC remains transgender-excluding in its by-laws and mission, they are helping transgenders in the area of hate crimes. (For those of you who follow my writings, saying anything positive about HRC is not easy, but I do give credit when it is due.)

4. Examine the initial hypothesis of "the coalition" that transgender inclusion into ENDA will cost them thirty pieces of silver, oops, votes. In the fall of 1996, the US Senate voted on the transgender-less ENDA and it received 49 Yes votes. In February 1997, I led an ICTLEP sponsored group of twenty transgenders onto "the Hill" and we met with the offices of every Yes voter. In summary, what we heard was they had no problem with transgender inclusion. We were told over and over and over again, that if Ted Kennedy and Barney Frank put transgender language in the ENDA Bill, they would vote for it. If Ted Kennedy and Barney Frank omitted transgenders from the ENDA Bill, they would still vote for it. In sum, they did not care either way and would vote for whatever ENDA Bill was introduced by Kennedy and Frank. A few months later in 1997, the new transgender-less ENDA Bill was introduced to the new 1997-1998 Congress.

5. Concerning Kennedy and Frank, during my time in Boston for the Lavender Law Conference, last 14-17 October 1998, I was struck by two things. One thing concerned Barney Frank. He keynoted the Lavender Law Conference. Before he spoke, the outgoing NLGLA Chair made remarks that were all LGB&T inclusive. Following that another speaker made remarks that were all LGB&T inclusive. Following that, a resolution was read and approved that was very, very (I did the final edit) LGB&T inclusive. Barney Frank was in the room, I saw him there, to hear it all—LGB &, &, & T. Then Barney Frank spoke, and it was all limited to L&G only, except he remembered to add the "B" word twice towards the end and he never said the "T" word, not a single time.

The second thing was the vigil held that same night in front of the State House (state capitol building) in Boston just across the street from the Boston Common. It was held to remember Matthew Sheperd, the gay man assassinated in Wyoming because he was openly LGBT. Representatives from state and city government and from numerous organizations around the city and state were there and spoke from the podium. EVERYONE WAS LGB &, &, & T INCLUSIVE.

That night, I concluded that the above strategy, this "90 day window of opportunity" for focusing a laser beam of lobbying action onto both Kennedy and Frank and ONLY on Kennedy and Frank was the needed NEXT action.

6. The three obstacles for transgender inclusion in the next ENDA before the new Congress in 1999-2000 are

A. Kennedy in the Senate,

B. Frank in the House, and

C. "the coalition" led on this issue by HRC. As I noted above, we have bullied HRC for four years (and I plan to continue until transgenders are in their mission) and "the coalition" has changed a lot.

We must convince in a polite and constructive, yet firm manner, Senator Kennedy and Representative Frank to become transgender inclusive in the next ENDA Bill to be introduced sometime after January 1999 to the new 1999-2000 Congress. That gives us 90 days. So send the letters, make the follow-up phone calls. DO IT CORRECTLY AND NICELY.

Send copies to your local PFLAG and enlist their letter writing action. Send copies to your local NOW and enlist their letter writing action. And please, please, the folks in Massachusetts who are LGB&T friendly, you will have the greatest impact of all.

Thanks for listing to me. Please forward this and repost and publish this and let us get to work. Ninety days and counting.

S.P.I.C.E.

(Spouses & Partners International Conference for Education)
SPICE - It's not just for cooking anymore!

by Bev

SPICE is designed to help the wives and partners of cross-dressers find balance within their relationships. Programs will help participants build emotional strength, self-esteem and self-respect. The focus is upon sharing special moments with others who have experienced many of the same frustrations and joys. Presenters will guide participants, both men and women, in their quest for confidence, the wholeness of being in a meaningful relationship and the joy of living a life to the fullest. SPICE offers the ultimate safe environment. (FOR THE COMFORT OF THE WIVES, THERE IS NO CROSSDRESSING ALLOWED AT SPICE)

....that's the "official" definition... Now, what does it mean to those that have attended?

I, personally, was impacted by a variety of things. The seminars were presented by professional, well qualified and practicing therapists, psychologists, marriage counselors, and gender experts. They knew their stuff!... They were open and available for one -on- one conversations, and were quite willing, even eager, to have small groups for a more detailed discussion of the issues that were of concern to the wives (and husbands!) that attended.

The seminars were presented in "women only" or "men only" groups. That gave the attendees the opportunity to discuss and question some specific items that, perhaps, would not have been discussed in a "mixed group."

Besides the professionals, it was the friendliness and warmth from other women .... other women who were facing, or had faced, the same types of emotional turmoil ***I*** was facing...that was so wonderful.

I will be happy to answer any questions I can about SPICE. Just email me at <cdso@hotmail.com>, and visit the SPICE home page at: http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/SPICE.html

So maybe you're wondering what "cdso" is?...Well, just go to the CDSO home page at: http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/CDSO.html ...and it wouldn't hurt to check out Tri-Ess Guestbook on the Tri-Ess ResourcesPage at: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Stonewall/6801/

Do You Know an Empathetic Clergy Person?

by Diane A. Zahn

I am working to assemble a list of empathetic churches/pastors/religious organizations by geographic areas and religious affiliations (OF ALL FAITHS) willing to talk with the transgender community. This list is to be provided to the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE). It is intended to support the IFGE service of providing referral lists of organizations and health care providers around the world to assist individuals in making contact with others in their own area, and as a support resource for the IFGE telephone hotline.

Nancy Nangeroni, the IFGE director, has requested that I act as a single focal point of contact as this information is gathered. Nancy notes that she is already struggling with an abundance of other IFGE correspondence, and would really prefer to have this added mail route through me as the referral list is compiled. I would therefore appreciate it if you can forward any contact information directly to me.

I would appreciate it if you could help me compile this list. If you know people or organizations at least willing to keep an open mind in their spiritual counsel, and can verify they are willing to participate in such a network of support, can you forward contact information to me so that I might include them on the list or write to them and contact them myself? You can contact me by e-mail at: damz@sprynet.com or surface mail at

D.A. Zahn
P.O. Box 2176
Monroe, MI 48161

If you have any questions or concerns about the IFGE's usage of this information, you can contact them at their mailing address:

International Foundation for Gender Education
PO Box 229,
Waltham MA 02254-0229

Thank you for your support. If you feel so led, I would appreciate your prayers that this effort give glory to our Lord.

Kananaskis Revisited

by Phoebe and Allison

Dear friends, Phoebe and I just got back near the end of last month from a Panama Canal cruise. Since my sister was aboard, I condescended to go on our first vacation together as Phoebe and GAIL.

But one month later (November) we took off for the West Edmonton Mall, the world's largest, in Edmonton Alberta. And this time, we did it right, as Phoebe and ALLISON. It was about a 900 mile trip each way, with hotel stops in Kamloops, Edson, Edmonton, Banff, and Revelstoke.

We left Olympia on November 16, the day after I led my second Ingersoll Crossdressers' Presentation meeting. Early the third day, we reached Edmonton, which had had lots of snow. We had most of the day at the Mall, scoped it out, found out where we could rent three-wheel electric scooters for the next full day, and checked out the famous recreation sites within the mall.

There is an indoor swimming pool larger than a football field, with a wave maker at one end, and a beach at the other. If you bring an inner tube or rent a water float toy, and start at the deep end of the pool, the waves will gradually push you all the way to the other end. There is a bungie jumping tower at one end, which is the tallest I've seen; it drops people all the way down into the water about half their body length, then pulls them up and bounces them above the water until the row boat comes out and unhooks them as they are lowered into the boat. People bring their whole families in for a "day at the beach", even when there is snow on the ground outside, as there was when we were there.

In another quadrant, there is a big sea-coast scene with a large wooden sailing ship, pirates, and submarines in which people ride around the "bay" on underwater tracks like the ones in Disneyland.

In the third quadrant, there is the best set of rides I have seen, built to last to the end of the world. A very high roller coaster with at least three full loops in in it. A smaller roller coaster that intermingles part of its track. Trains, power swings, and the Death Drop (seven stories of free-fall, strapped in with 3 companions, and a little 100 foot stopping

area where it levels out), all adorn other parts of this section. What a blast!

On the second day we rented the electric scooters for $21 Canadian ($15 US) all day. We went back to all the places we had spot checked, took a bunch of pictures on floppy disks with my digital camera, and after a whole day of moving around, we were still fresh as dandelions in the fall.

We didn't really go to the mall to buy anything. We already had everything we needed except a stroke and maybe a case of anthrax. But we found some very attractive overblouses, a tailored, lined blue denim-like silk warm up suit, a suit for Phoebe, and a few other things for each of us. I had bought a fake silver fox neck piece on sale at Mervins for $16 on the way up, and it made the overblouses look very expensive. (It's always nice to fool people a little bit, especially when you're crossdressed.)

When we left, we drove down to the Kananaskis Hotel, to revisit the site of our last Holiday en Femme. The mountains going in were dusted with snow. The weather was very cold, as it was when we were all together there. We were about a week ahead of the first big snow fall there, so there were no skiers about. The hotel was just as nice as before, but was a little like a tomb, because there were no conventions right then either. We had a wonderful lunch there, and

poked around the rooms we had used at our Tri-Ess convention, and took a few pictures for old time sake.

After lunch, we drove to Banff, where we spent the night. We shopped around for several hours after having settled our stuff into our hotel room. We just missed going up the gondola lift by 15 minutes (after it closed), but got a good shot of the Banff valley from their 6,000 foot high parking lot.

The next day we drove to Lake Louise for breakfast, in the same dining room we had all enjoyed with our Tri-Ess sisters a couple of years ago. The waitress met us with a pitcher of orange juice, and asked what else we might like to drink. We went whole hog on breakfast as we soaked up the view of the snow-covered lake and glacier. It was very luxurious, and we felt like we were millionaires for an hour or two. The road out was beautiful, with its mountain background, and we shot a few more pictures on the way out.

We saw the spot in the Lake Louise Hotel where the two guys with mop buckets in the hall suddenly laughed when our group passed, and said, "My God! Those are men!" And we remembered taking the pictures of the Fairfaxes and some other sisters on the grounds. It was a grand experience to relive.

We wound up in a big snow storm on Rogers Pass, a couple of hours after we left Lake Louise. I slid off the road into a big ditch, and we got the police and the department of transportation sanding truck to call for a tow truck to get us out. The police came back a half hour later with a woman whose engine had stopped 10 miles behind us. They said at least she could stay warm if she were with us. It's a good thing they did. The tow truck they called never did show up. But three hours later, a wandering tow truck looking for Mrs. Johnson, an AAA member, and they stopped and winched us out. Meanwhile, I waited up on the road, waiving people past, as they slowed down to ask if we needed help. Our woman "guest" appeared ready to go into shock, the longer we waited for the truck. Our rescuing tow truck took her back to her car to see if they could get the engine started.

We bought a new tire in Revelstoke, and spent the night in a delightful little Swiss Chalet motel for the smallest amount of money we've spent for a motel for years. And in the morning, we drove all the way home from Revelstoke, arriving about 9 at night in a big rain storm, and just missing getting snow-closed in on Snoqualmie Pass east of Seattle.

Our whole experience was as the two overripe tomatoes, the way we love so much to travel. My voice seems to be the most unbelievable part of my presentation, but it's about the same tone as Phoebe's, and nobody ever questions her womanhood, so they don't mine either.

We think of you often. In fact, we think highly of you, and thought the most fun of the trip would be sharing it with you when we got home. So you're stuck.

Your friends, Phoebe and Allison

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Insurance Accepted

How to Contribute to Your Chapter Newsletter and your Mirror

By Diane V.

In order to assure that your newsletter is kept productive and stays out of trouble, here is a simple instruction manual for maintaining your newsletter:

1. Pick up pen (or pencil) and paper.
2. Enter writing chamber. (Could be office, den, porcelain facility, etc. You get the idea.)
3. And speaking of ideas, engage brain (but do not clutch!)
4. Proceed to transmit signals from brain through digital process on either right or left hand with writing instrument connected.
5. Warning! Do not exceed personal limitations, commonly diagnosed as writer's cramp, or diarrhea of the pen (similar to diarrhea of the mouth).
6. Do avoid, however, another malady known as writer's block.
7. To aid in evading point number 6, a series of ideas follows: personal experiences; shopping trips; dining out en femme; embarrassing moments; fuzz busting and fuzz-busted; other busty experiences, such as stops at Jiffy Boob; recipes for almost anything; your autobiography; personal discoveries on makeup techniques, clothing, etc., worth sharing; personal triumphs and tragedies to the extent you wish to reveal them.

How about it, Gals!!

(Reprinted from Alpha Omega's Femme Silhouette, Oct. 1966)

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Many Thanks..... MIRROR Staff

The following is a tear jerker entitled "Dressing Down a Community" which is an AP article that I found in this morning's Houston Chronicle. It is about a 15 year old MTF transsexual who with her parent's understanding and permission was, WAS, trying to go to school. Her classmates had no problem. But the parents did and now she is out of school. This appeared in Houston Chronicle, Friday, Oct 30, 1998 I hope that the next time you hear someone talk about how we must help our lesbian and gay youth get through school, that you remember this article and tell the person about it and how important it is to add "bisexual and transgender youth" to that list. Phyllis.

Dressing Down a Community

Students Defend Feminine Boy Forced to Quit School

By DAN SEWELL

Associated Press

CARROLLTON, Ga.—Patrick Nelson had heard there was a cross-dressing boy enrolled at his high school. But darned if he could figure out just who it was.

"I looked for him the first couple weeks. The honest truth—I didn't even know," Patrick said.

One day, he was talking about the mystery to a friend, who smiled and pointed to the pretty blonde at the desk next to his.

"I said, 'No way, that's too weird!' " Patrick recalled. "Then I thought about it, and I said, 'So what's so weird about that?' "

But while Patrick and his friends were willing to accept Matthew "Alex" McLendon's feminine appearance and mannerisms, others in this rural, conservative western Georgia community of about 20,000 weren't.

And so 15-year-old Alex withdrew from school under pressure, leaving supporters of the popular, easygoing student wondering what threat they had supposedly been protected from.

"Alex wasn't causing any problems. She got along well with everybody," said classmate and friend Meayghan Denkers. "She wasn't trying to change anybody to be like her or anything."

After a heated meeting of the board of the small, private Georgian Country Day School on Oct. 6, Alex was "invited to withdraw" or face expulsion. Alex, who had enrolled in September after attending public school, was cited for wearing a tongue ring but had been called before school authorities earlier about his female dress, makeup and hairstyle.

Most of Alex's classmates, including some boys, wore bows in their hair in protest until ordered by the principal to remove them. Some indignantly quoted their school handbook, which urges acceptance of "diversity in opinion, culture, ideas, behavioral characteristics, attributes or challenges."

"Alex represents something that's way beyond the experience and the comfort zone of the very conservative people we live with," said Lori Lipoma, Meayghan's mother and a drama teacher at the school. "I really think we all lost something very precious that night."

School officials would not discuss the case.

"We make no comments on students," said Rex Camp, chairman of the board of the school, where tuition is more than $5,000 a year for the 50 or so high school students. Kindergarten and elementary students are in a separate building, but one parent of a 6-year-old expressed concern at the board meeting about Alex's effect on younger children.

"I believe in sexual standards in society, and I want my child in a school that holds the same sexual ethics that I do," said Craig Neal.

Alex, who speaks in a soft, feminine voice, began cross-dressing two years ago and considers himself "95 percent girl."

Larry Harmon, a Dade County, Fla., psychologist who counsels patients on sexual identity, said such feelings appear to fit a rare condition called gender-identity disorder. He said it doesn't necessarily imply homosexuality, and it's difficult to know how many youngsters have it and why.

"I'm not homosexual," Alex said. "I just look like a girl and I dress like a girl. It wasn't anything flamboyant, not sequins or anything. But because I'm a guy ... "

He enrolled in night school but quit in less than a week because he didn't feel the courses offered would help his education goals. He hopes to pursue a career in fashion merchandising and modeling.

Alex said Thursday he's looking into the possibility of home-schooling.

At the Georgian Country Day School—where Alex said he enrolled to get a better education—he struck up a friendship with Meayghan and was soon invited to spend nights over at her house. The first couple of times, Meayghan's mother popped in on them unannounced just in case.

"They'd be sitting there doing hair, or painting nails, and I said to myself, 'This is a girl,'" Lipoma said.

A few weeks into the school year, Alex and his father were summoned to a meeting with school officials. They said that parents had complained, and that he had to dress like a boy, Alex recalled. He refused and was sent home. A special board meeting followed.

Under the law, a public school would have had to show that Alex was disrupting education or undermining safety. A private school has more leeway.

Alex's mother died when he was young. He said that his cross-dressing initially caused a rift with his father but that his dad stood with him in the dispute with the board. Mack McLendon declined an interview.

"School is supposed to be preparing you for life," Alex said. "Parents are trying to protect their kids by covering their eyes. It's going to be a real shock for some of these parents when their kids get out into the real world."

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* One time payment in full is required for these categories. Crossdressers financially unable to afford the minimum annual contribution amounts shown above should write for optional payment plans, reduced payments or waiver.

[The terms used herein assume the Crossdresser is male. Female Crossdressers are also welcomed. Please write Tri-Ess for detailed information]

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Chicago, IL 60659-7859

Donna Martin's Email Address
djmtris@aol.com

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For privacy and security purposes, Crossdressers and their wives, and other members, may choose to use assumed names. Most Crossdressers adopt a feminine name. If you do not have a name, have fun. You might select one that is similar to your real name, 'Sam' becomes 'Samantha', 'Donald' can be 'Donna', or choose one that defines your femme personality, 'Hillary', 'Mae', 'Dolly', 'Marilyn', your first girlfriend, or favorite movie actress. You can use your true surname, or choose a modification of your last name. However, it is usually advisable and we recommend you create a completely different femme surname. The choice of your name(s) should be made thoughtfully to meet your personal security needs and preferences. Even your mailing name may be another pseudonym. For additional security and convenience, we encourage Crossdressers to use a US Post Office Box or similar commercial mail receiving service. Simply rent the box in your true name and list any others names, including your femme name and your mailing name, as authorized to receive mail.

If you have been a former member of Tri-Ess please give your membership number, if possible, state of residence at the time, and the femme name used for your previous membership

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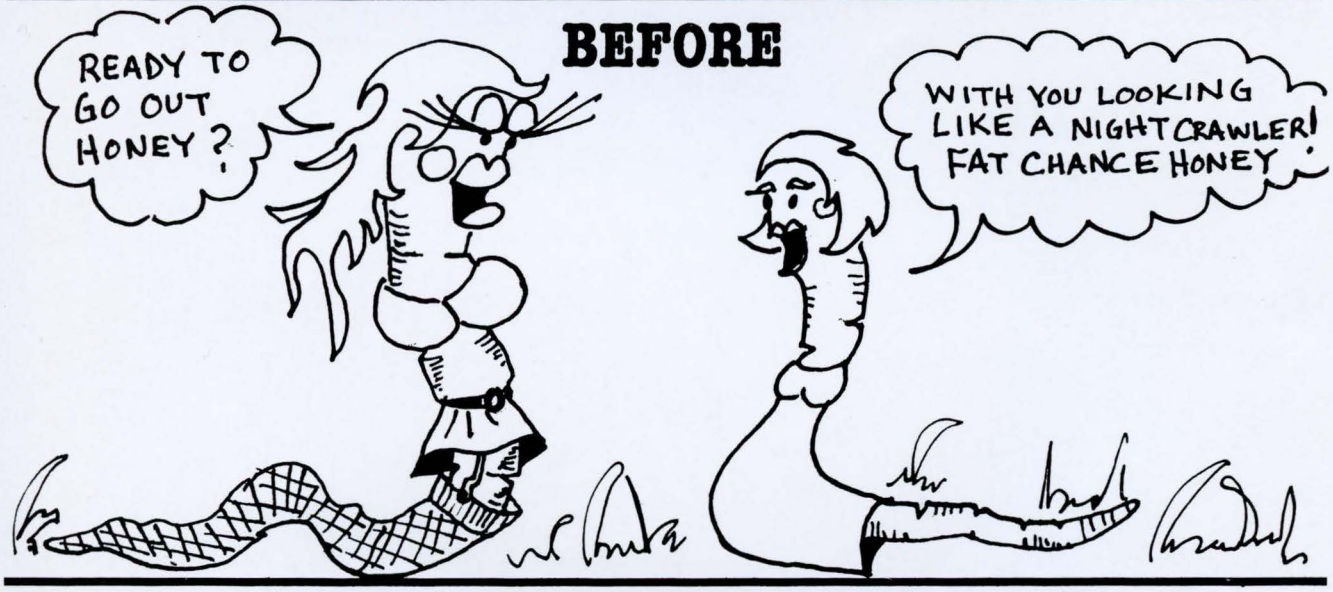
Milicent

The Cross Dressing Worm

By Melissa Ann Hadley

The Influence of a Good Wife or Significant Other



REMEMBER ME?

by Cheryl

Remember me?
I'm your Mom.
I gave you birth.
I bandaged your scrapes.
I wiped your tears.
Where did you go?
Do you remember me now?

Remember me?
I'm your Wife.
We spent romantic evenings.
We shared future dreams.
You have no time for me now.
Would you miss me if I was gone?
Do you remember me now?

Remember me?
I'm your Son.
We used to throw a football.
We'd wrestle on the floor.
Now I am grown
With a Son of my own.
Did you notice I was gone?
Do you remember me now?

Remember me?
I was Daddy's little girl.
You called me princess.
We built castles in the sand.
Now I'm a Mom myself.
You missed my wedding.
Do you remember me now?

Remember us?
We're your loved ones.
Tossed aside for dresses and perfumes,
Pancake make-up and high heels.
Are we still in your world?
Or have you left us all behind?
Do you remember us now?

Recently on the CDSO Online Forum the subject of the crossdresser's preoccupation with his dressing has elicited many fevered responses. The consensus of opinion was that too many crossdressers seem to forget their families, that cohesiveness is lost, and that dressing takes precedence over all else. The above were thoughts that came into my mind in response.

Letter To The Editor

Dear Frances,

Just a line of thanks for including in the Winter issue of the Femme Mirror the story of "Sewing for Christmas" by Ricky. If I knew which Ricky it was that wrote it, I would also send her my personal thanks.

I too sew and endure the same frustrations. In my solitude of separation I was laughing so hard I almost lost it! The part about how the button always migrates to uncharted areas of the cloth with no relation to the button hole was totally hilarious. My sides were splitting! It was the very best short story of the year. Keep the humor coming. We need to outlet our confinements, and there is no better way than a good laugh. The feeling afterward is ecstasy.

Thanks for your good choice.

Your sister,

Robyn KS-4719-B

(Ed. Note: Ricky, a.k.a. "The Bearded Lady," for many years contributed her delightful columns to the late lamented Cross-Talk Magazine. To our great gratitude, she sent us a disk full of her articles some time ago, and I try to select some two or three to include in each issue of the Mirror. Thank you for writing to let us know you enjoyed "Sewing for Christmas." As an erstwhile amateur seamstress myself, I can certainly relate to the migrating buttons, slippery seams and other perils lurking in that lovely fabric to trip the unwary! - Frances)

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL!

Check your mailing label right now, before you throw away the envelope! Your DUES RENEWAL DATE is right there next to your MEMBERSHIP NUMBER. If your RENEWAL DATE falls within the next three months, RENEW YOUR DUES NOW! This is the only notice you will receive! DON'T FORGET, or this FEMME MIRROR will be your last!

Editorial Policy

The FEMME MIRROR will not publish any material that bashes any crossgendered person or support organization, nor will it publish any ad hominem argument

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Our Gender Family #14 - January, 1999

Religious Legalism Meets Crossdressing

by Rachel Miller

In my gender community debut at the Texas "T" Party in early 1996, I described my journey to become a complete person. As I spoke, the memories of the pain I had endured from repeated rejection came flooding back. I had seen the impact on countless others and promised myself I would never forget. If you haven't personally experienced that type of pain it is easy to pass by unaffected. One of my jobs is to help others sense what we have experienced.

The ridicule and rejection of cross-dressers as expressed by mainstream society is so strong that the most consistent advice I have received from others was to never tell anyone! There is an incredible fear that we will lose our wives, our children, our jobs; everything of importance. That fear becomes even more palpable for those who wish to have a personal relationship with God. We are extremely hesitant to bring the question to our minister for fear of being branded as a sinner, excluded from the church and separated from God. So most of us say nothing and continue to hide causing still more guilt, shame and pain.

Some friends advised me not to bother trying to talk with religious leaders about our issues, claiming that they wouldn't listen. I hoped that assessment was overly pessimistic, but when my newsletter urged religious leaders to Let The Walls Fall Down (Keyword to: http://members.aol.com/rachelmill/ogf_13.htm) in love, most of the bricks fell on my head. I used to think of Bible thumpers as people who pounded on their Bibles to make a point but these people pound their Bibles on the heads of anyone who disagrees with them.

Without learning any personal facts about my situation nearly 80%, 42 of 54 clergy, labeled my cross-dressing as sinful and requiring repentance. I was stunned by the overwhelmingly negative and often violent nature of the responses. If that was the reaction when they acted "out of love" as many insisted they were doing, I shudder to think what it would be if they didn't love me. These extracts (Keyword to: http://members.aol.com/rachelmill/54respnd.htm) demonstrate the seriousness of the situation.

In each case I sent a follow-up email pointing out that only one Biblical verse addressed the issue, that commentators gave multiple interpretations of the meaning and that most concluded it wasn't about cross-dressing per se. Given that, I concluded that a blanket condemnation is not warranted, that each case needs to be viewed separately and that dialog is needed to understand the situation. In turn the clergy branded me as rebelling against God, failing to accept His Word and suffering from a serious relationship problem with God.

So what's the story here? Am I an honest seeker of the truth or just a rebellious critter who wants to shape the Bible to fit my own agenda?

This newsletter encourages thinking and questioning. We may feel more comfortable if we don't, but seekers of the truth must challenge conventional ideas. That probing is difficult, but serious inquiry will either validate the truth of the existing views or lead to better understanding. My request of religious leaders is to read this material without firing off an immediate reply. Please take the time to pray and seek God's will on how He would have you proceed.

My early religious training was administered by Catholic nuns in grade school. The vehicle was the Baltimore Catechism. The method was to memorize the questions and answers or experience the splendor of a ruler across the knuckles. I didn't need to think. I didn't need to study the Bible. I just had to regurgitate the answers on demand. Trouble was, my brain kept thinking up new questions. Sister's response was if I even think of another question, it is a mortal sin and I am damned to Hell. So I learned the answers. I learned to keep my thoughts to myself. I learned fear and guilt. Hardly the best foundation for a relationship with my Creator.

Religious conditions didn't change much for me until I encountered the Jesuits at Marquette. "What does it say?" was replaced with, "What do you think?" When I stumbled about, uncertain how to respond to this new concept, I got smacked with a verbal ruler. "Look! God gave each of you a brain. He expects you to use it. I'm going to teach you how to use it, not what to think. Now, what about...?" We were expected to challenge assumptions and validate logical steps. We were taught to draw on a wide variety of material developed by people with differing yet knowledgeable views and then use our own critical thinking abilities to make informed decisions. I was starting to learn to express my thoughts. I was starting to unlearn fear. Once I started on this path, return to the old one was impossible.

A fundamental aspect of good logic is to carefully examine the authors' assumptions. If I accept their assumptions and they employ sound logic, I will find myself forced to agree with their conclusion. Many writers gloss over their assumptions or never state them explicitly. I want mine to be clear so you can assess them. My assumptions are that -

- God is my Creator
- The Bible represents God's Word and helps direct my life
- Scripture must be interpreted in light of the times and circumstances in which it was written
- There will always be a certain amount of ambiguity in Scripture
- No single scholar or religious group has the definitive word on all Scriptural meaning

It is my duty as a Christian to obtain as much insight as possible and remain open to hearing the views of others even if they are different from my personal beliefs

The religious community's response to *Let The Walls Fall Down*

About Our Cover Girl

Dr. Melanie Rudd

Dr. Melanie Rudd is the newest member of the Tri-Ess Board of Directors and has been appointed Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

Melanie is not new to the gender community. As far back as the 1960's she was involved in early gender work in Houston. While working at a Veterans' Administration hospital, she co-authored a review of this early research work with crossdressers and their wives. Melanie is an original charter member and a past President of Tau Chi Chapter in Houston, and has been the recipient of Tau Chi Chapter's Carol Beecroft Chapter Leadership Award.

As a leader and organizer, Melanie is the co-founder of PM Publishers, Inc., a leading publisher and distributor of gender literature, and is the co-founder of Dignity Cruises.

As "Head Cheer Leader," best friend, and "The Husband Who Wears The Clothes," Melanie has been the primary motivator of the books written by her wife, Dr. Peggy Rudd, and has been responsible for the computer layout and design of Peggy's books.

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The Society for the Second Self, Inc.
Financial Summary for the Year Ended December 31, 1997

Revenue and Support

Total Revenues $57,100*

Expenses and Program Services

Total Expenses $55,800**

Excess Revenue $ 1,300

** Includes supporting memberships of $39,700.*
*** No Officer or Director receives any compensation.*

The Tri-Ess Reserve Funda Balance as of December 31, 1997 $43,480

homed in on Deuteronomy: Chapter 22, Verse 5, "A woman must not wear men's clothing, and a man must not wear women's clothing," and said it clearly identified me as a sinner who needed to repent. They said failure to acknowledge my sin left me in a state of rebellion against God.

Previously I had looked up several interpretations, found multiple views and concluded it was not an absolute condemnation of cross-dressing. That level of analysis was enough for me at the time but was inadequate now. Since I am not a Biblical scholar and can't compete with religious leaders on detailed Scriptural interpretation I turned to existing Bible commentaries. I was determined to find out what they had to say and gather all points of view. I finally stopped looking after 30 commentaries (Keyword to: http://members.aol.com/rachelmill/30coment.htm). Here's a summary of their interpretations with the number of each shown in parentheses:

- Pagan religious connotation (12)
- Deviant sexual practices or moral issues (9)
- Maintain proper distinction between the sexes(8)
- Part of a collection of laws with a common theme (5)
- Definitely not about simple cross-dressing (5)
- Magical connection related to disguise or deceit (4)
- Related to armor or wartime attire (3)
- No comment (3)
- Hard line literal interpretation to be applied to all cross-dressing (2)
- Doesn't apply because we aren't under the law (1)

A handful spoke with authority by making absolute statements. About one-third offered multiple possible explanations, hence 52 interpretations from thirty sources. Over half used qualifiers such as likely, may/might, possible/probable, seems, some or suggests/suppose. With that diversity of opinion, how can anyone insist that their view is the correct one and impose it on others without allowing any questioning? Rather, I believe that this diversity supports my contention that a blanket condemnation is unwarranted.

Some still insist on taking this verse literally without qualification or interpretation. If they say it is wrong for a man to wear a dress, then logically they must also say it is wrong for a woman to wear pants, suspenders, a vest and a tie. Virtually everyone applied the rule vigorously to men yet ignored it when dealing with women. How can that be justified?

Continuing with literal interpretations, two other verses are curiously related to clothing. Verse 11, "Don t wear clothing woven from two kinds of thread: for instance, wool and linen together." Why isn't there a great disturbance about wearing shirts and blouses made of polyester and cotton? Verse 12, "You must sew tassels on the four corners of your cloaks." Wearing tassels today is more likely to be associated with a burlesque show than a religious expression. Why didn't anyone mention these verses?

Verse 22 is really interesting, "If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lie with the woman and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel." If you brand a cross-dresser as an abomination aren't you similarly required to put adulterers to death?

Finally, verses 28 and 29 state, "If a man finds a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver and she shall be his wife; because he has humbled her, he may not put her away all his days." Are we to force every man who seduced a virgin to pay a dowry, marry her and prohibit a divorce for his lifetime?

If anyone chooses to take part of one verse literally, then they must take the others the same way. We have only discussed six verses from one chapter, and I don't know anyone who consistently follows the literal interpretation of all of them. The Torah has 5,851 verses and some make even these situations appear mundane. Are we to take them all literally as well? If we don't take them literally, what should we do? Consider these alternatives:

For Religious Leaders

- Stop rushing to judgment by condemning all cross-dressing as a sin requiring repentance
- Start dealing with these hurting individuals with love and compassion by discussing the issue constructively
- Help these men achieve a personal relationship with God

For Cross-dressers

- Stop silently accepting the pronouncements of religious leaders regarding cross-dressing and use these materials to open a dialog
- Start seeking an accepting church home—see my quest (Keyword to: http://members.aol.com/rachelmill/chrchome.htm) for some ideas
- Be honest about your issues and seek constructive solutions rather than hiding.

In a recent Greg Evans' "Luann" cartoon, the husband is watching her at breakfast. Without saying a word he mentally critiques her every action—using regular coffee instead of decaf, an extra spoon, lots of cream, leaving toast crumbs in the butter, not wiping up a spill. Finally Luann turns and says, "You're being 'Judge Mental' again, aren't you?" Far too often we fit that judgmental mold. Wouldn't it be better to fit the loving mold of Angela Michaels, a member of my gender family, who said, "Love is—Not worrying about the difference." We can choose whether to build the walls between us and God higher or to help them fall down. What will you choose

Notes: My catechism experiences and battering because of cross-dressing aren't unique. For those who have felt the sting of legalism, shame and guilt in a religious context, help is available. A good place to start is the book, "The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse" by David Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen.

For those religious leaders who find themselves trapped in the

Continued on page 14

Simone Sees Stars

by Diane Liegh TX 4261 H

Simone, a girl who is always ready to go out to dine but has never gone shopping, bit the bullet and took the plunge recently. With a lead-in like this, you all know that someone else was there providing a little encouragement, and in this case it just happened to be Diane.

Diane had arranged a business lunch with Brian of the catering department of the Crowne Plaza Suites to discuss her upcoming party and was looking for someone to go with her. Apparently the possibility of a free lunch and an afternoon shopping were sufficient to induce Simone to agree to go.

The first question in all situations such as this is, "What should I wear?". Diane had decided to be the business lady at a meeting and chose a kelly green double breasted suit with a slightly below the knee pleated shirt. She wore a short sleeve beige blouse and beige 2½" heels with an enameled ornament. She chose a plain gold choker type necklace and matching bracelet. She also wore rings on each ring and little finger.

Simone wanted to dress up for the meeting but didn't want to be overdressed for the shopping. She finally settled on a calf length dress with bright spring flowers with attached black blouse, capped sleeves and a scooped neckline, accented with a paprika colored jacket which complemented the colorful skirt. The outfit was accessorized with gold earrings, bracelet and watch. Low heel sling back black shoes completed the outfit.

Simone and Diane met at high noon in the Crowne Plaza lobby. Simone arrived first and circled around the lobby, looking for Diane, all the time wondering if she would be read and if she had come to the right place to meet Diane. After several minutes she decided to sit down and wait in a lobby chair located directly by the front desk. The area was busy with people and hotel workers but no one seemed to pay attention or notice Simone's presence in the lobby. It was somewhat nerve wracking since Simone was not accustomed to being out in public, totally by herself. When Diane finally did arrive, which seemed like several hours later, but in reality was only ten minutes later, they greeted each other and proceeded to the restaurant where Diane told the maitre 'd that they were there for a meeting with Brian of the catering department. They were seated and provided liquid refreshment while they waited for Brian.

They were seated right in the middle of the restaurant, a wide open area which is visible to the whole lobby. There were diners at two adjacent tables, and these ladies barely drew a glance as they were seated. Several other diners came and went during the luncheon but no one paid our duo any notice.

After Brian came, they discussed the particulars of the upcoming party and made many decisions. Brian then left to return to another meeting and our girls enjoyed their lunch. It was only after they were finished eating and visiting and were ready to leave that they discovered that Brian had provided a complimentary lunch. How sweet it is! A luncheon in a public restaurant, en femme, and then finding out the meal was free!

The girls decided that since Simone did not know where the Valley View Mall was or where Dillard's was within the mall, they would both go in Diane's car. A few minutes later they were parked at the mall and ready to begin Simone's shopping adventure.

Diane, in the interest of comfort, removed her suit coat and exchanged her heels for a pair of beige flats before departing the car. Our daring duo was now headed for the door to Dillard's (dreamland) misses department.

The girls walked through the door to find the misses department relatively devoid of other shoppers. There may have been half a dozen other ladies looking through the racks. Like Santa Claus in the poem, "We said not a word but went straight to our work...". Their work in this case was looking through all of these wonderful racks of feminine clothing. They just automatically separated and each followed her own siren call to the racks that were calling her.

Diane didn't find anything "to die for" in the misses department so she wandered down the aisle to the women's department. Diane had been looking for regular cotton blouses to be worn casually but had not been able to find a thing. Wonder of Wonders! Two large display racks of casual blouses, many of them cotton. And not only that, they were all 50% off. After going through both racks, she had an arm load of candidates for purchase - but would they fit? There was only one way to find out.

Diane walked over to a saleslady and said, "I would like to try on these blouses. Would you like to find a dressing room for

me or should I just go find one for myself?" She looked me right in the eyes and said, "Just help yourself, Honey!"

It didn't take any more discussion and Diane was on her way to find a dressing room. After trying on several of the blouses, she decided that they would all fit. Her predicament was that she didn't dare get all of them. She had bought four new blouses the night before and gotten four others via catalog a few days ago. Well, the one with the black and white checked trim would go beautifully with her new black and white checked straight skirt; and the one with the pink trim and the little fish on it would go well with her skorts (of Piedra Falls fame).

She settled on just those two and took them out to the saleslady. Simone had wondered over to the cash register empty handed to see what Diane had purchased. The purchase concluded, Diane set to work attempting to get Simone to find SOMETHING that she would at least like to try on. They both listened intently for a siren's call, detected one and followed it to the evening dress section of the misses department. She thumbed through the racks like a veteran. However, she kept coming back to this little frock. Seeing a chink in her armor, Diane needled her into trying it on. She threw it over her arm like a veteran shopper and headed for the dressing rooms. On the way she wanted to know how Diane had gotten into the dressing rooms in the first place. Diane told her the same thing that you have already been told about her conversation with the saleslady. Simone commented that that was a very clever way of deciding all of the issues involved with using the dressing rooms without bringing up the crossdresser issue directly.

In the dressing room, Simone removed her street clothes and donned the gown. Alas, it was too large. Not one to be thwarted that easily, Diane told Simone to stay there and she would be right back. Back to the racks went our dauntless shopper and found the same frock in two smaller sizes. Back to the dressing room strode Diane and entered in triumph. Simone selected the one of the two gowns and it fit like it had been made for her.

Things like the price you pay for your clothes is considered privileged information so we are duty bound not to disclose how much Simone spent. However, if we tell you that it had been discounted about 80% from its original price and took just a little more that a medium sized bill of US currency to purchase it, you would probably decide that she had found a "good deal". Diane had weakened her sufficiently by this time that she relented and purchased the gown. This gown may just have a public exhibition around the last of November.

Simone is nothing if not thoughtful and she proved it again."Diane", she said, "Where is the jewelry department?". Off our duo headed, toward the escalator, upward to the jewelry department. She was now milling and mingling freely with all of the other shoppers. While she inspected the jewelry, Diane headed off for the shoe department. She didn't find anything which intrigued her so she wandered back to the jewelry department to find Simone still looking. She eventually decided on, not one but two, items - both for her significant other - Sarah. We might all take a small lesson from Simone in this instance. 'Nuff said.

The girls decided to return their purchases to the car and then roam about the mall. They were stopped at the far end of the mall by a nice elderly lady who was taking one of those polls that malls are famous for. "Would you ladies like to participate in a poll?" she said. Diane asked about the subject matter and when told it was about purchasing video tapes, said that she hadn't bought a video tape for ages. The lady then turned her attention upon Simone. They chatted for a while before Simone declined to participate in the survey. All three ladies then chatted for a while until Simone and Diane decided to depart and wished the poll taker well. She said, "You ladies have a pleasant time shopping this afternoon!"

We had both been called ladies several times now and were literally floating along the mall. We decided that we needed to get our feet on the ground so we stopped at the food court, ordered soft drinks ("What would you ladies like?") and sat down to chat.

There we sat, en femme, in the middle of the Valley View food court, surrounded by other people and NO ONE paid any attention to us. We discussed the day's activities, how much we had enjoyed them, how much other girls were missing by not venturing out, how much more fun it was to go with someone else, how more than two drew attention, and a multitude of other subjects. It was now 4PM and basically we had only been in two departments of one store. This shopping thing is a hard, tiring job but somebody has to do it.

Our ladies had to depart the mall to meet prior commitments so Diane drove Simone back to the Crowne Plaza to pick up Simone's car. They said their farewells and parted, aglow in the day's experiences and looking forward to their next outing.

Guilt And The Transgendered Individual

by Donna Matthews

As children, we have impressed upon us sets of rules by our parents and others in positions of authority. At this stage of our life, we don't question the validity of these arbitrary rules. We, for the most part, follow them blindly, feeling we must. These are "must do" rules and form the basis of our conscience.

As we mature, we find that we are in a constant struggle between our impulsive desires and the ideals set forth by society. Our conscience reflects this, producing anxiety, guilt and doubt. These checkpoints, so to speak, keep us from deceiving ourselves. They alert us as to when we are acting contrary to our sense of self. They serve to remind not just of our place in our society and culture, but of our place in the whole of existence.

Our conscience works because we have the ability to weigh conflicts against an internal set of values. When presented with a choice which we feel is in character with what we consider to be an internal ideal, we feel that we ought to act on it. This is different from the feeling that we must act on something. "Must" actions have as a part of them, an element of fear of retribution lest one not comply (e.g.: we must obey the law.) "Ought" actions, on the other hand, are weighed against our self-image; they are value judgments. They carry no fear attached to them. While there is no imperative that one call one's parents, one may feel, never the less, that one ought to call them.

When a thought or action is contrary to our self-image, it produces guilt. Guilt is a strong emotion, rarely equating to a fear of punishment. Instead, guilt is indicative of a violation of some internal value; a kind of disgust at falling short of short of one's ideal sense of self. It is important to realize that we develop our lifestyle, our sense of self, not solely by the ideals prescribed by society and culture, but by the integration of many different events and circumstances. Some elements we accept and some we reject. Many elements are internalized and refashioned to suit our developing Self.

As transgendered individuals, guilt is a feeling we seem to know all too well. We experience so much guilt because we live in a society which teaches us in no uncertain terms that there are "right" and "wrong" ways for men and women to act. Not following the "guidelines" puts one at odds with deeply ingrained societal expectations.

From our culture and experience, we synthesize an image of the ideal man or woman, whose likeness we strive to emulate. For cisgendered individuals, this poses little conflict. Men strive to be masculine and women strive to be feminine. As transgendered individuals, we have a much tougher time of this. We internalized the societal ideal and added it to our value system. If we act in opposition to this ideal, guilt sets in, leaving us with the sick feeling that we have once again failed to live up to that ideal. Many times, we simply stop acting in opposition. We repress the other ideal we have created; the one more true to ourselves.

On the other hand, by not acting on our urges, we also experience guilt. By not being true to our innermost self, we act in direct opposition to what feels most natural to us. We're dammed if we do, and dammed if we don't. We have developed a conflicting set of values: those prescribed by society at large, and those of our own persona. As a result, we try to be true to two opposing sets of values. Not a particularly good spot to be in.

So, which is right? On the one side there are Societal values, and on the other we have our personal values. We exert enormous amounts of energy trying to resolve this conflict. We read. We talk. We rationalize the hell out of what we do. In short, we spend our lives trying to come to terms with this conflict between the outer world and our inner self. And to what end? It always seems lead back to the same sense of guilt and shame. Clearly, something has to give.

Ultimately, we seem to reach a point where we realize that we are different from others. We start to deconstruct the standard issue societal stereotype, and in its place, create one which fits us better, one more in tune with who we are. Once done, the standard rule set no longer applies. It is at this point that the guilt starts to ease up. We start to accept ourselves for who we are and stop trying so hard to fit into the original societal stereotype. We are told, "You ought to be like thus and thus!" Why? Because the arbitrary morality of society would have us believe that because we are different, there is something fundamentally wrong with us and somehow in need of correcting? I think not. We declare to ourselves, at the very least, that we are of equal validity as are all other members of society. We are not in need of fixing. We're fine just the way we are.

And so we cope. Some better than others, but nonetheless, we make peace with ourselves, allowing the guilt we carry around to dissipate, leaving behind a stronger and more integrated individual.

(By Donna Matthews. [http:www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Village/2001/] Reprinted with permission., from the Fiesta Chapter newsletter.)

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Inadvertent Adventures or, To Boldly Go...

by Allison Marsh

Hearing from a new friend who is becoming much more comfortable in going out shopping en femme, I was reminded of my own experiences. Some of my fondest memories are also of finding for the first time that I could try things on in the women's dressing rooms with no question arising.

Another fond memory was of a big New Year's bash in Seattle, put on mostly for the gay community by a commercial group called the Tacky Tourist. There must have been at least 500 people there. It was in a formerly busy train depot, which is now rented out for such events. The bathrooms were marked for "Men" and for "Genetic Women Only". They even had a female guard at the door. I marched right on past her, took care of my business, stood at the mirror and fixed my makeup, and left—twice during the long evening.

Then there was the time about half way up Vancouver Island from Victoria, when we had stayed overnight in a little town and went for breakfast at Denny's. I went into the ladies room for the usual purposes, but the scrub woman was down with a brush and pail, scrubbing out the toilet stall. She heard me come in and called out, "I'll be through in a minute." And sure enough, five minutes later she was. I had stood in front of the lavatory, fixing my hair, adding a spot of lipstick, and all the tom foolery things we would-be women can think of to do in front of a mirror. Actually, by the time she emerged, I remember I had made myself look exactly like Princess Di, except that my tiara was not real diamonds. When the woman emerged and walked out past me she gave me the strangest look. I mean really strange. Anyway I proceeded past the partition that kept hand washers from looking beyond into the other various fittings Denny's can install in a bathroom. The first thing I passed was the urinal. Obviously I'd read the sign wrong. Louis L'Amour would have been very disappointed in me.

Have you noticed that the best time to practice your femme voice is in women's restroom conversations? I have read that we should, if using a restroom that becomes occupied by a different woman than ourselves, rinse our hands, keep our mouths shut, and get out as quickly as possible. But I was never good at reading directions. (You should see the terrible quality of the photo prints I get off of my color printer!) Anyway, I usually wait for the woman to speak. Most can't resist it. And then I respond in kind. One day I was the sixth in line in a ladies bathroom which had self-disposed of the last sheet of toilet paper. Everyone was wringing their hands about what they could do about it. I made the astute observation that someone of us needed to inform the management of our plight. If you have ever served on a Campfire Girls board of directors, you know that all the other women in attendance will enthusiastically support your proposals, and then wait for you to do what ever it was they thought sounded great. So I walked clear out to the cashier and told her we had some dirty women who were awaiting a means to clean themselves. I came back with three rolls of toilet paper, and had I had a pad to write their addresses, I could have had an invitation for a home visit from all five of those sweethearts.

I seldom talk politics in women's restrooms. In the first place, my most frequent use of femmerooms is while I am traveling. And I find that in those places, most of the really motivated women are traveling too. Perhaps it never occurred to you, but most women who travel extensively are Republicans. It never hurts to say, "What a lovely shade of lipstick. It must be a very exclusive brand." It's really kind of fun to hear someone put an elite spin on the word "Maybelline". And a well placed comment that the lady at the next wash bowl has the most realistic wig you have ever seen, is almost bound to bring on an extended discussion about deportment, manners, and ladies' room courtesy. Conversations like these are not only enlightening, but they develop in us a quality called "discretion" which we can employ on future occasions.

When Phoebe and Allison went to Branson, Missouri, there was a mid-performance break in one of the shows we attended. Of course, there were insufficient women's toilets available, so the management commandeered one of the big men's rooms and said, "Who ever is first in line has the job of steering the men to a different bathroom." When I had worked up from number twenty to number one, I got to tell six dirty old men that they were not allowed entrance to this bathroom—this one was just for us girls. Even then I was guarded in my conversation because most of those women were clearly Republicans.

I cannot stress strongly enough the need to avoid Republican women in bathrooms. You must remember that it was probably Republican money that built the restrooms, and un-

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less we truly belong to the club, we are sort of their guests. And that's a really tenuous position, especially if you are a strong believer in GLBT civil rights. Out of bipartisanship, I try to avoid adjusting my prostheses at the mirror.

It is kind of fun to look back on the Claw's assurances, as we entered a big public hot springs swimming pool in Colorado, that there were two dry brassieres in our changing bag that we took to the women's dressing room. Well, even the Claw is entitled to a mistake once in a while, though when we found out that there was only one brassiere for the two of us to leave in, it wasn't very nice of her to grab it first. I didn't think about proposing we each take one cup and hold on to the other breast. Truthfully, it would not have been as difficult for her to lift hers a little and look like a debutante than it was for me to try to juggle two loose prostheses under a blouse, go out past the cashier, get one hand stamped while the other was so busy trying to keep the tail of the tear drop boobs turned the same direction, open my car trunk and dig out a second bubble hanger from a suitcase, then return a block to the dressing room just in time to watch a 300 pound exhibitionist in the open area trying to squeeze into her size 10 bikini. That was the only really ugly memory I'll probably carry with me for the rest of my life.

Continued from page 9

role of the abuser, the same source offers help in breaking that role. God loves us all and His healing is always available.

For those seeking more information about the spiritual issues faced by cross-dressers, the Grace & Lace Newsletter (Keyword to: http://hometown.aol.com/gnlnews/index1.html) is an excellent source. For church leaders willing to open their hearts and churches to cross-dressers, please contact:

Diane A. Zahn, P.O. Box 2176 , Monroe, MI 48161
damz@sprynet.com
(Keyword to: mailto:damz@sprynet.com)

Diane is working with IFGE (Keyword to: www.ifge.org), the International Foundation for Gender Education, to assemble a list of empathetic churches, pastors and religious organizations willing to talk with members of the transgender community. We need your active involvement to break down the walls that other religious leaders have constructed.

Rachel Miller %Opportunities for Improvement
P.O. Box 31475, Oakland, CA 94604, U.S.A.
(925) 935-9594
http://members.aol.com/rachelmill
(Keyword to: http://members.aol.com/rachelmill)

Love is.....
being happy for the other person
when they are happy
being sad for the other person when they are sad
being together in good times
and being together in bad times
Love is the source of strength

Love is
being honest with yourself at all times
being honest with the other person at all times
telling, listening, respecting the truth
and never pretending
Love is the source of reality

Love is
an understanding that is so complete that
you feel as if you are a part of the other person
accepting the other person just the way they are
and not trying to change them to be something else
Love is the source of unity

Love is
the freedom to pursue your own desires
while sharing your experiences with the other person
the growth of one individual alongside of
and together with the growth of another individual
Love is the source of success

Love is
the excitement of planning things together
the excitement of doing things together
Love is the source of the future

Love is
the fury of the storm
the calm of the rainbow
Love is the source of passion

Love is
giving and taking in a daily situation
being patient with each other's needs and desires
Love is the source of sharing

Love is
knowing that the other person
will always be with you regardless of what happens
missing the other person when they are away
but remaining near in heart at all times
Love is the source of security

Love is the source of life
—Susan Polis Schutz

Colorful Clothes

by Ricky

Since you're reading this, I'll assume you have read at least one article where some learned person expounds on why men like to dress in skirts and such. You'll find reasons like "freeing the inner self," "expressing our femininity in a hostile world," or even, "it just feels good." Somewhere in the list of the good things in being a crossdresser will inevitably come a comment to the effect of "being able to wear a rainbow of colors instead of a gray flannel suit."

Ah, right, can't forget that. Why, just walk into the ladies department at any major store and you will be surrounded by reds and blues and other less identifiable colors whose names are only known to fashion designers. Can you honestly say you can call a color to mind when someone tells you something is a lovely shade of teal? Teal? Fuchsia? Where do these names come from? It's got to be the same people who come up with the names pharmaceutical companies use for their latest drug. But anyway, there you are surrounded by soft cloth and multitudinous colors and you HAVE to buy something, anything, to satisfy that insatiable urge to own just one more blouse, or skirt or sweater....

Gleefully grabbing the first thing in reach, you fall in love with it. But, oh my, it's too small. No matter, the plus sizes are just over there. You troll through a sea of color, leaving pinks and purples bobbing in your wake, sailing (or maybe sale-ing) on to new and brighter outfits. But wait, everything is going dark. What's happened? Suddenly you're back in Kansas. Everything has gone black and white. The rainbow hues and patterns have drained away, leaving colorless stripes and polka-dots. If you're lucky you will find a large floral print in a dull silver on flat black. You're in The Land of the Large Woman.

It's a conspiracy, that's what it is. Somewhere in the tastefully decorated offices of the fashion mavens it has been decided that large people do not wear colorful clothes. Not only do they nick you for an extra few bucks for the Plus Size, but they save a buck by not having to use all that expensive dye in the cloth. After all, when you're a size 24, a tent will do. You're past the decreed bounds of fashion.

So what can you do about it? You can learn to sew and after a few years' practice you may get good enough to make something you could wear in public. So you run to the nearest fabric store and again glory in the many colors. Feeling faintly out of place you find the pattern books and start paging through. Shifts, dresses, blouses and skirts galore. There, the perfect dress for next week's meeting, but the size chart stops at 18. No matter, you keep an eye on the size chart as you look and discover anything in your size makes you think of the big top at the circus. And what fool put padded shoulders on a size 4X dress anyway?

Life just ain't fair if you're trying to be a big girl. It's enough to make you want to become a nudist. But that wouldn't work either!

(This article originally appeared in Cross-Talk, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)

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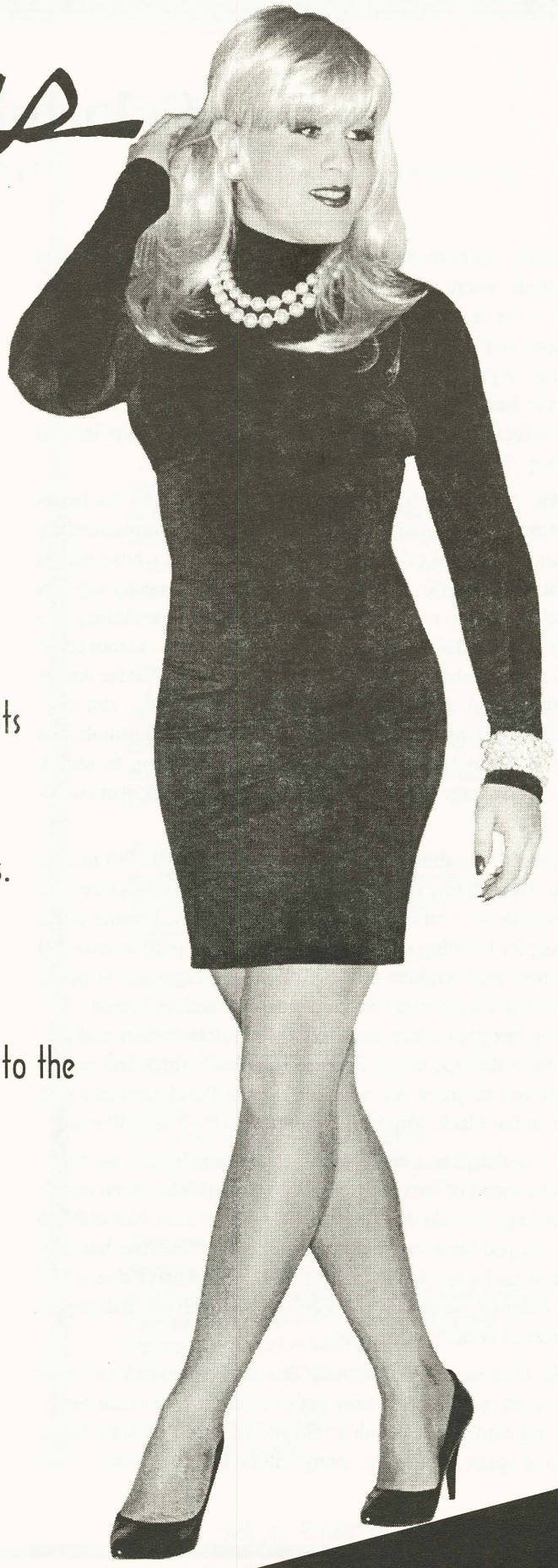

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The CDSO Online Forum

by Bev Early

Being married to a crossdresser isn't easy, for most of us. It is full of challenges, conflict, tears, and the question "Why?" Being told about the crossdressing, (or accidentally finding out!!!!) years into a relationship, also brings up issues of trust and deceit. For many of us, talking this over with your mother, your co-workers or your best friend is totally out of the question.

That's why CDSO exists. BECAUSE WE NEED TO TALK, SHARE, LEARN. This is the only e-mail based, secured forum, to my knowledge, dedicated solely to wives and female partners of heterosexual crossdressers. We address issues of self-esteem, trust, love, sex, money... well, you name it... There is ALWAYS something to ask, or tell, or share....

CDSO is intended to be a safe haven for women to discuss, find, and offer support in the context of their marriage/partnerships with heterosexual crossdressing husbands. Think of it as a type of incubator, if you will. We have many women just finding out about their husbands' crossdressing, and are in the grip of a fear and turmoil unlike any other they have faced. We have many women who have accepted and appreciated their husbands' crossdressing, and we have many women who do not accept ANY part of it! All are welcome on this forum.

Some things you might want to know...There are no men allowed on CDSO. We wanted to make this a place for women to speak their minds about the issues that concern them...and not have to worry about what the "guys" would think. Aren't you just a little worn out with keeping the secret?..and all that crying? There is NO pressure to accept or not accept the crossdressing.

We have many very knowledgeable women on our forum who can answer a variety of questions. Our forum is governed by a supervisory board of three... (all women) married to crossdressers, and is sponsored by Tri-Ess. Our rules and regulations are sent to each person upon their request to join, so there are no surprises.

Well, there it is.. We are here. If you have any questions e-mail me at: cdso@hotmail.com

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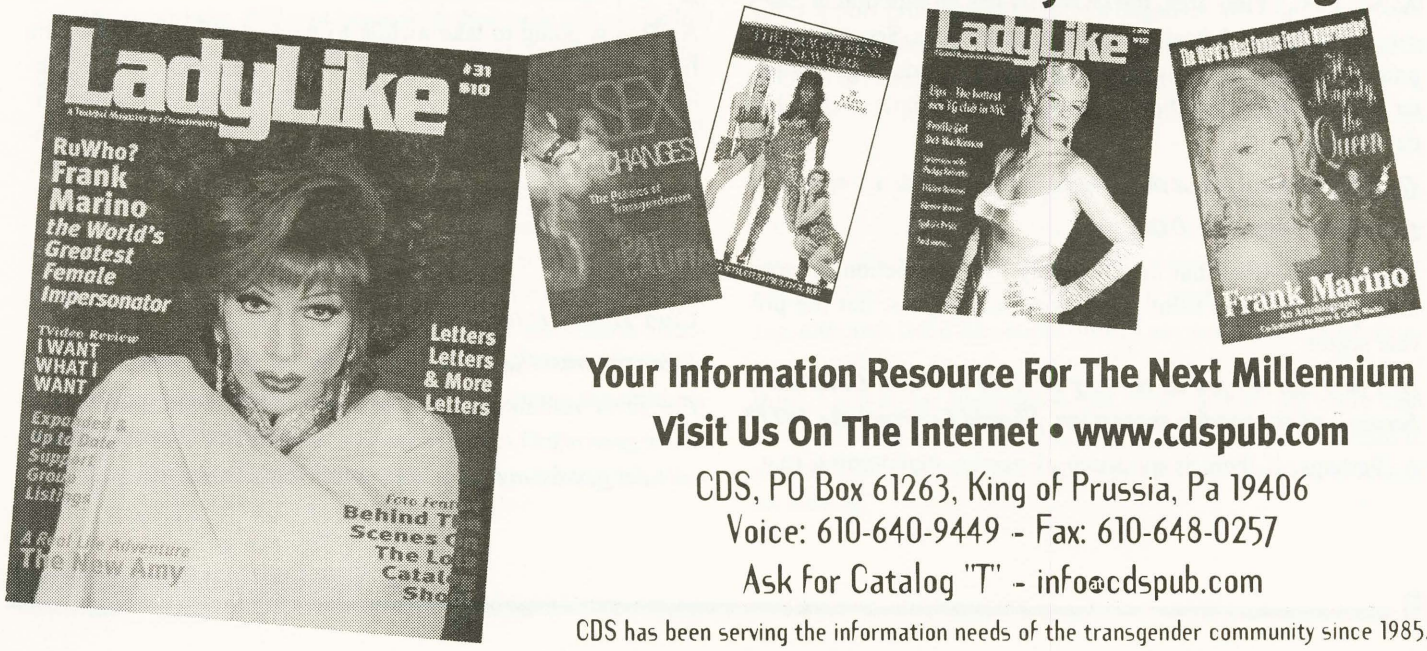

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Department of Justice Announcement

An Analysis by Clare Howell

The U.S. Justice Department announced on 14 Nov 98 that the DOJ will study the possibility of using existing civil rights laws to litigate cases of state and local government discrimination against people who do not conform to gender stereotypes; e.g., effeminate males, masculine females, and transgendered people. In response to subscribers' questions, we offer this analysis to clarify the implications of the DOJ's announcement for transgender people.

Q: What is behind the movement at the DOJ?

A: Hard to say. Some commentators are suggesting that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 might bar discrimination based on gender stereotypes. Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, the recent Supreme Court decision, is an example of a heterosexual man, a slight, soft-spoken man, who was verbally harassed by other men for not fitting the masculine physical stereotype. The precedent set in this case supports the notion of a similar application to cases involving discrimination against gay, lesbian, and transgender people.

Q: What is a sex stereotype, a gender stereotype?

A: Examples of gender stereotypes includes the ideas that women aren't aggressive, all men are exclusively attracted to women, and that everyone is born either male or female, with a matching sense of sexual identity.

Q: Does this mean that the DOJ is now protecting transpeople and other gender-different people on the job?

A: No. First, in this area, the DOJ only has jurisdiction in cases involving state and local government employees. Second, at this point the DOJ is merely examining how its efforts might be better focused in light of how federal sex-discrimination law has developed.

Q: I just lost my job at the Jorgenson Toolworks Company. Should I contact the DOJ?

A: No. Remember that the DOJ only has jurisdiction in cases involving state and local government employees, not the private sector.

Q: I just lost my job as the city clerk in RuPaul, Oklahoma, because of my gender-expression. Should I contact the DOJ?

A: Perhaps. If there is evidence of gender-stereotyping (e.g., witnesses who heard stereotypical statements, or documents containing or reflecting them), you may want to contact the DOJ. However, be aware that the DOJ staff may refer you initially to the EEOC, because a referral from that agency is needed before the DOJ can act in this area. Moreover, if the DOJ staff decide to begin litigating, they will not necessarily take every case brought to their attention. It is more likely that the staff will look for cases with the greatest value to set precedent.

Q: Does this mean we no longer need gender protection in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)?

A: Not at all. First, in this area, the DOJ's jurisdiction is limited to state and local governments, whereas ENDA is broader. Second, the DOJ only enforces existing law. This development reflects the DOJ's interest in better understanding the coverage provided by existing law. Enactment of ENDA, however, would change the law itself, settling these issues once and for all.

Q: Is there a downside to all this?

A: Yes, on three fronts. First, the DOJ could be so besieged by anxious folks expecting the DOJ to win back their jobs that the DOJ backs away from this initiative, and it becomes more difficult for groups interested in gender rights to work with the DOJ. Second, the courts could reject further application of gender-stereotyping theory, leaving us worse off that before. Third, DOJ activity in this area, and/or court decisions, could trigger a Congressional backlash.

Q: How should we react to this?

A: This is going to take awhile to work itself out, both in the field, at DOJ, and in the courts. In the meantime, we recommend that you continue to educate your Congress-member, either at Lobby Day or at home, and continue to seek local employment protection for public and private employees that explicitly includes gender expression.

Clare Howell is the Editor of InYourFace

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Remembering Those We Love

Tributes by various members

Elaine Monroe: A Life

by Gloria

This biography is meant to celebrate her life, as well as to document the trials, tribulations and ultimate triumph of spirit that Bill went through in giving birth to the Elaine that became so well known in the gender community.

Bill was the youngest of 6 children, 4 boys and 2 girls. The family lived in Hoboken , in an apartment over their hardware store. At a young age, Bill began wearing his sister's clothing. In spite of his fear of discovery, he exhibited an unusual boldness. Late at night, dressed in his sister's clothes and with a kerchief on his head, Bill slipped into the store, and walked down the street. Luckily, he wasn't discovered. There would have been quite a scandal had he been stopped by the Police!

The dressing continued secretly until Bill entered college. For some reason, he had no desire to dress during his college years and during the Navy years that followed. Upon discharge from the Navy at the end of WW II, he once again began to dress. Bill, of course, did not understand his urge and thought that he was unique. However, he now believed that the way to get rid of these desires was to get married. So, without telling his fiancée' about his urge to crossdress, he embarked upon married life.

One year later, Bill was home with their new son, while his wife went out for the evening. She came back for her umbrella, heard the baby crying, and found Bill in the bathroom in some stage of crossdress. She did not take this very well, and used her excellent vocabulary to inform him of his perversion and unworthiness. Unfortunately, the ritual of secret crossdressing and uncouth cursing continued throughout their many years together. Bill felt guilty about his desires and tried unsuccessfully to stop. He went to several therapists, who also tried to help him stop. His favorite therapist believed he could work more effectively if Bill dressed before the sessions. The therapist finally gave up, because he realized that Bill was enjoying the sessions as an opportunity to dress.

Over the years, Bill's three boys witnessed many loud parental fights but did not realize the cause. At the tender age of 15, the youngest two, who were twins, found out about the crossdressing. They, of course, were very confused. The twins' efforts to understand took the path of calling many different relatives to ask about their father's behavior. Word quickly spread and the ensuing commotion only led to more family unhappiness. Not surprisingly, one of Bill's sons, who is a psychologist, believes his father was depressed for many, many years.

Bill's wife actually was responsible for his "coming out." She found out about Tri-Ess, thinking it was a support group like AA where crossdressers helped each other to stop. Bill had just purged his last clothing when he received a call asking him to come down to the group for an interview and telling him he could be dressed. He was surprised and excited and immediately went out to buy clothes for the occasion.

Once Bill realized that there were other crossdressers, and what he did was considered O.K., his life was changed!! Now Elaine could become a person who didn't need to hide. Bill got his own apartment (with enormous closets) and began a years-long buying spree. Elaine had to have every style and every color of clothing and wig. Soon he filled the three large closets and had clothes hanging on the back of every door, as well as in cartons in the bedroom.

Elaine went for walks on weekends and trips to the mall. She also made frequent journeys to Atlantic City, to Pocono weekends and to transgender conferences. At this time, the original support group in Bordentown began to break up. Elaine and Danielle decided to form a group closer to home and founded MOTG in Elaine's living room. They were soon joined by Terri, and later by Roz, and gradually MOTG became the thriving group it is today.

Bill's life was not complete, however, because he needed a partner who could accept his male and female selves. After we met, he made sure to tell me about the crossdressing early in our relationship. I was intrigued and felt it made him more interesting, although it did take some time to get used to his transformations to Elaine. Together we made some changes in Elaine. I think I helped her understand that "real" women are more than just 1940's movie stereotypes. Hopefully, I was instrumental in getting Elaine to wear more appropriate clothes and to be less of an airhead.

Remembering Those We Love

We met many wonderful people and Elaine and I had an opportunity to broaden our understanding of crossdressing and transgender. Of course, Elaine always had lots of opportunities to be "out," both semi-locally and on our trips. For several years, we enjoyed lots of Bill trips and Elaine trips, seeing beautiful sights and attending informative conferences. On the Elaine trips, we went to the Be All in Pittsburgh, to Southern Comfort in Atlanta, to Fantasia Fair in Provincetown, on a Dignity Cruise in the Caribbean, to several Pocono weekends and to SPICE conferences in Memphis, Delaware and California.

In addition to founding MOTG, Elaine was always willing to appear before non-transgender groups to educate them, and was dedicated to helping others come out of the closet She broadened her horizons by joining NOW and a gay and lesbian religious group. Elaine also loved to march in parades and to represent the transgender community at gay festivals. She was always outspoken and demanded her rights as a transgendered person. Once she gained self-respect, she would never let herself be put down again!

We know that many people's lives have been enriched by knowing Elaine. MOTG held a very warm and touching meeting in May to honor her. After she died, the Gay and Lesbian Havurah conducted a very heartfelt memorial during their monthly service, and I have spoken to, and received notes and calls from many friends in the transgender community who remember and appreciate her. I was determined that Elaine's spirit should be represented at the funeral, so I wore a blue suit and beige blouse that had belonged to Elaine. When I later told Bill's daughter-in-law, she was surprised to find that Elaine had dressed so well. So Elaine made one last statement and had one final lesson to teach!!

Remembering Lenore

A Tribute to a Special Friend

Several weeks ago, our long time member Lenore sat down to watch television and quietly passed away in her chair. She was 76 years old. Her survivors include three sons, four adoring grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews and good friends. But that hardly tells the story!

For those of you who didn't know, Lenore was an ordained minister, and not just an ordinary church minister, at that. "Rev. X" was a well known historian and theologian, an author and scholar who was much sought after as a speaker and preacher. He also spent many years as a hospital chaplain, bringing love, hope and peace to those on the final frontier of life. He was greatly respected and will be greatly missed by untold numbers outside our community.

Lenore first came in contact with Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess when she called the chapter hotline back in 1985 or 1986. This was the beginning of a long and close relationship between Lenore, Naomi, Barbara Lee, Eve and a few others who knew of her status. She became a regular at Chi Chapter meetings, dinners and events, always looking her best. She loved going out shopping and for dinner with her Chi Chapter friends.

Lenore and Naomi became good friends. They had dinner together quite often. Even though Lenore preferred to keep her status discreet, she also looked forward to going with Naomi to make class visits at the College of Dupage and at Manchester College in Indiana. At these events she would describe herself as being a "marriage and family counselor," which she was, indeed.

Lenore had a wonderful sense of humor. Naomi tells the following story:

"Lenore and I always looked forward to our dinners together. They became interesting discussions on a wide variety of topics, from current events to religion to crossdressing. Lenore had studied comparative religion and knew more about my Judaism than I did about being a Lutheran. Even though we came from entirely different backgrounds, we almost always agreed on moral guidelines, prohibitions and pronouncements. We also frequently discussed the Biblical pronouncement on crossdressing in Deuteronomy. Our talks also included more mundane things. At one dinner a few years ago, Lenore disclosed that she had received a letter from the Illinois Secretary of State, telling her that because of her age, she had to take the driving test as part of her driver's license renewal. At the same time, I told Lenore that I had received my license renewal and I had to take the eye exam. Several weeks later, at dinner, I asked Lenore how the driver's test turned out. Lenore told me she had done something she wasn't proud of: she had worn her minister's collar when she took the driver's exam. When I asked how she did, she said she had passed with flying colors. No problem! Lenore then asked me how I had done at my renewal and I told her I

Remembering Those We Love

hadn't gone yet. She then responded: 'Would you like to borrow the collar?'"

Though we are all saddened by Lenore's passing, we can rejoice in the life she led. She was a good person, a person of courage and strength in chasing her dream. We have lost a good brother, a dear sister and a wonderful friend. We will miss you!

Our Dear Departed Sister Diane

by Grace

By this time, some of you are already aware of the recent passing of our dear sister Diane Johnson. Diane died of a sudden heat attack while vacationing at Rehobeth Beach the weekend of June 6th. What you many of you may not know is that if it had not been for Diane, we probobly would not have a Tri-Ess chapter today.

I had been interested in forming a Chapter since I joined Tri-Ess in 1987 but it wasn't until Diane contacted me in 1996 that the dream started to become a reality. Diane was so committed to the idea of forming a chapter that in October 1996 she rented a room and sent out invitations to all the Maryland members listed in the Tri-Ess Directory, indicating that she was hosting an "open house" for local members to meet each other. Although this little get together was not particularly well attended, it did set the stage for larger things.

I drew inspiration from seeing how committed Diane was to forming a chapter and I knew that if I moved forward I could count on her enthusiastic support. With that I mind, I began another organizing effort using a slighly different approach. Although you have all seen the fruits of that effort, I think that it is important to point out that without Diane's inital inspiration and vision we would not be where we are today. Consequently, we, and the generations that will follow us, all owe a debt of gratitude to our dear sister Diane.

Diane was truly committed to Tri-ess and we will all miss her enthusiastic and outgoing nature. We pray that her beloved Ann finds the peace and strength she seeks in this time of difficulty.

(From Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter Newsletter, Baltimore MD)

Loss of an Original Member

On August 16, 1998, Fiesta Chapter lost one of the original charter members when Janet D. died in her sleep at her residence. Janet's health had been slowly failing over the past few years, and her ability to get out had been affected. Janet's entry into crossdressing was unusual, in that she started at her spouse's insistence and with her encouragement. In addition to helping start the Fiesta Chapter of Tri-Ess in 1987, Janet attended several Texas T-Parties, Holidays En Femme and Dignity Cruises. Through the years Janet graciously offered her home for chapter meetings when necessary and provided overnight accommodations for out-of-town members. Over the past year Janet's participation in chapter events decreased as her health failed. She will be missed by the members of the crossdressing community that knew her, and by those who have benefited from the legacy she left behind.

(From the September 1998 Fiesta Newsletter.)

Tri-Ess Announces Chapter of the Year, Commended Chapters for 1998

by Jane Ellen Fairfax

CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

Tri-Ess Chapter of the Year for 1998 is Chi Epsilon Sigma of the Washington/Baltimore area. This chapter was chartered only six months ago, yet they have accomplished more than any other chapter this year. Before 1998, three attempts had been made to found a chapter in the Washington-Baltimore area, where there were two established diversity groups. All attempts failed, even though we have always received a lot of inquiries from this area. Within four months of starting the new effort, Grace Gardener had a chapter chartered! At the first meeting of CES, there were 26 in attendance, including 11 wives! Many sisters participate in the operation of CES, and all members are required to serve on one of four committees.

Not only did the group support SPICE, they were also represented there. They started their chapter library by buying a copy of every book in the SPICE bookstore. Since half the proceeds were donated back to SPICE, they effectively made a donation to SPICE as well. Not content with mere monthly meetings, almost all the sisters participate in an ongoing e-mail friendship network throughout the month. I have become familiar with Grace's introduction of new members, and her invitation to all of us to great them warmly. But I was really surprised one week, when she asked us to send e-mail greetings to some more new sisters -nine of them! Needless to say, the rate of support for Tri-Ess in this chapter is 100%. We have seen upsurges in Tri-Ess membership in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

They have just instituted a striking innovation which will undoubtedly fulfill for their area our dream of a Tri-Ess chapter in every population center. They have divided the chapter into four sections, each of which is an integral part of CES, but each of which has its own e-mail friendship network. When the numbers warrant, they will hive off chapters to southern Pennsylvania, Alexandria, Virginia, and Richmond, Virginia. In addition to all this, they have a newsletter, which is available not only by US mail but also by e-mail.

At the inception of the chapter, the leadership worked to support the wives and encourage them to come to meetings. Result- enthusiastic involvement of the wives.

Although officially only six months old, this chapter is already one of the larger chapters in Tri-Ess. As far as accomplishments, there is not another chapter to touch them for 1998.

COMMENDED CHAPTERS

Tau Gamma Chapter

Greensboro, North Carolina

Tau Gamma Chapter of the Greensboro, North Carolina, area is another remarkable chapter the Chapter Awards Committee has voted a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter for 1998. It is very unusual for a chapter to achieve this distinction in its first year of operation, but they have most certainly earned it!

They have brought to Tri-Ess a new approach with their original and constructive programs for couples. They have made a clear commitment to making Tri-Ess support available in all population centers in their area. This is exactly the work all Tri-Ess chapters should be about. Their newsletter, "The Gender Blender," is of excellent quality, with an abundance of interesting articles and lively participation from the wives. It clearly reflects the family values for which Tri-Ess is so well known.

Not only do they have an excellent understanding of the Tri-Ess vision for support and education, they have exported it to others. Their knowledge and support have been of immense value to two forming groups that are now fully chartered Tri-Ess chapters. Such efforts as these give vital encouragement to leaders as they work patiently to reach out to crossdressers and families in need.

At the same time, they have gone out of their way to make Tau Gamma fun. Their camp-out weekend was obviously a great success, and was commented on throughout the Tri-Ess online forums. It deserves a reprise! For a first-year chapter to host an "event" is another distinctly unusual accomplishment. Clearly, too, the Mad Hatter's Ball was a signal success that drew together Tri-Ess supporting members in their region. They are truly to be congratulated!!!

Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter

Orlando, Florida

The Chapter Awards Committee has also voted Phi Epsilon Mu a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter for 1998. A long-established chapter, they have continued their outstanding work of outreach and education in the Sunshine State. Their membership drive

has been a definite success, for they stand at their all time high in the number of Tri-Ess members in their state. Their newsletter has been superb all year, and it has reflected the values and decency for which Tri-Ess is well known.

Their location gave them the opportunity to participate in SPICE, and their wives were up to the challenge. Not only did they come in impressive numbers, they were some of the most constructive idea-people at the conference. And once back home, they wrote of what they had learned and published it in their "FEM" newsletter for the benefit of all! That's the way to spread good will about this most important Tri-Ess program!

It is clear that Phi Epsilon Mu generates an enormous amount of good will for Tri-Ess. I receive a good bit of feedback from visiting sisters, who praise the friendliness and fun they encounter among the Florida sisters. What a lovely way to make timid sisters feel good about themselves! Phi Epsilon Mu, you are truly to be congratulated!!

Alpha Omega Chapter
Cleveland, Ohio

The Chapter Awards Committee has voted Alpha Omega a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter for 1998. Another solid, long-established chapter, they have embarked on a great work this year, enhancing dramatically their outreach program and bringing more members into active participation.

Their venture into cyberspace outreach is truly remarkable. They have made it possible for sisters to reach them by e-mail, and their website is very attractive. At the same time, "La Femme Silhouette" has maintained its outstanding quality. There's a little something in it for everybody, and I really enjoy the original articles.

As always, 1998 at Alpha Omega has been blessed with original and varied programs. They will always hold the distinction of being the first chapter to hold a Tri-Ess Officers' Night. This has given them the opportunity to meet some of the worker bees in our hive, and create lasting bonds of friendship and sisterhood that will make Alpha Omega an ever more enthusiastic participant on the Tri-Ess team. Given these developments, it is not surprising that Tri-Ess membership in Ohio has bobbed upward in 1998. They are truly to be congratulated for all they have accomplished this year!

Some of them have made special efforts to extend service and care to others. I have really appreciated the Saturday morning phone meetings with Gloria, who is always looking for new ways to reach out and help others. I don't know what will happen if all chapters start having a "Tri-Ess Officers' Night," or start reaching out to the Tri-Ess leadership, but it is a problem I would love to have!

So that many of you may come and experience this honor, Tri-Ess will present this award at the Holiday En Femme in Houston , Texas, November 1999.

Tau Chi Chapter
Houston, Texas

Last but not least, the Chapter Awards Committee has voted Tau Chi a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter for 1998. For many years, Tau Chi sisters have been 100% supporters of Tri-Ess. In large part they have been responsible for the fact that Texas is now third among the states in Tri-Ess membership, and is gaining on the two leaders. They have adhered to the decent, family-oriented values of Tri-Ess, while promoting the cause of unity among all gender-gifted people that has made Houston almost unique in Genderland.

Tau Chi has supported SPICE as no other chapter has. Thanks to their commitment, more Texans attended SPICE 1998 than came from any other state! Their presence there was very constructive, and one of their number was appointed to a most deserved place on the SPICE Planning Board.

One of the knottiest problems a chapter faces is getting members to participate actively in the chapter newsletter. Somehow Kimberly has done it! It is also wonderful to see humor in a Tri-Ess newsletter. The professional appearance makes the "Femme Forum" a joy to receive.

Tau Chi is to be commended for the development of original ideas in the non-crossdressing Boys-R-Us program. The crawfish pig-out, and the rollicking time at Oktoberfest, were really fun! They are to be truly congratulated! Highly commendable, too, is the hard work they put in every quarter, stuffing the "Femme Mirror." And, it is really refreshing to see how the plans for Holiday En Femme 1999 are coming together. If this dedication and thoroughness continue, HEF 99 will be a truly memorable event!

So that as many as possible may come and experience their chapters' honor, Tri-Ess will present these Chapter Awards at the Holiday En Femme in Houston , Texas, November 1999. I expect that the stage will be pretty full, and that every sister will come up and share in the joy of her own chapter's Award! Congratulations to you all!

All of It

by Ricky

Picture this if you will. I just spent three days laying In bed, doing nothing more strenuous than reading a stack of good books (Dick Francis, if you're curious) while my every need was tended to by smiling, courteous attendants who brought me my meals and constantly made sure of my comfort. This was all the more pleasurable because I was in an air conditioned room while the rest of the world was coping with a heat wave and the headlines reported people dropping like flies of heatstroke. On top of all this I was being paid to lie there in that bed. This comes very close to my definition of bliss, but would you believe me if I told you that through all this I was required to wear a nightgown? Believe it, it's true, the absolute, unvarnished, truth.

Not a bad deal, huh? So what's the catch? There has to be something wrong here. OK, I'll admit there were a few things I failed to mention, like I had three IV lines trailing from various parts of my anatomy and all those attendants had medical training. Once each hour they opened a valve taped to my arm and drained off some of my blood and rushed off to some secret room to do unspeakable things with it. On the third day they began pumping insulin into one of those lines and sent my body into overdrive to see how I metabolized glucose, and the consequent buildup of fluid from my kidneys fought a major battle with my disturbed psyche as I tried to, as the sympathetic nurse put it, "void" my bashful bladder while a crowd of onlookers milled outside my door. The good meals consisted of bland, low fiber things like canned orange juice, stacks of white bread and banana, and the bad ones were about a quart of sickly sweet liquid meal that makes a McDonald's milkshake seem palatable. And the nightgown had a flower pattern so hideous that only a semi comatose patient could be convinced to wear it without a team of husky nurses to strap it around his protesting body.

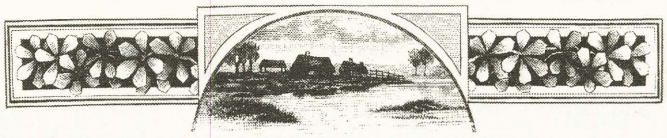
So after reading both paragraphs you now have a complete picture of the drug study I am involved in. A few months ago I was officially declared diabetic, and joined my parents and several siblings in the rituals of popping pills and testing blood samples. For those of you who care, things are fine and working out well, cutting out candy bars and other forms of sugar controls my problems. I couldn't pass up the chance to get paid for being diabetic, however, and volunteered for the study. I do miss doughnuts, though.

This little parable is influenced by some of the more strident articles I have read concerning SRS lately. To this admittedly biased observer who has no interest in SRS there seems to be a building movement to abandon any serious examination as to the appropriateness of surgery for a particular person, with strident calls for the right of surgery on demand. When you phrase it that way it seems to make sense. After all, it says right in the Declaration of Independence we have the right to pursue happiness, so just why should some knucklehead surgeon be able to deny it to us? We are responsible adults, after all, we shouldn't be treated like children! Give me what I want now, or I'll throw a tantrum!

The problem I see is the lack of the other side of the story, an inability to acknowledge that someone who is experiencing a crisis of identity of major proportions is not capable of reasoned examination of their situation. Lord knows I have done some stupid things in my life, things I cringe to remember because they were so utterly, obviously, asinine that no rational human being would have attempted them. But I did them, and had convinced myself at the time they were the right thing to do. There is no doubt in my mind I needed a dispassionate observer to point out my problem and help me cope with it, but there was no one around to offer that service. I rather suspect I would have rejected any advice offered in the throes of these irrational periods, but I surely needed it.

So why the movement to free people in need from the necessity to be damn well sure they are not doing something stupid? Is it so all fired necessary to have your way right now that the other half of the story should be hidden? The change may seem like bliss, just like my description of my stay in the hospital, but I really do advise checking out just what isn't being said before you are committed.

(This article originally appeared in Cross-Talk, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)



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Femmed Out of Your Mind: Gender Intoxication

by Melanie Yarborough

There's a standing joke in the Transgender Community: when a crossdresser says or does something foolish in public while en femme, she says, "Hey, I'm in blonde mode, okay?" i.e., she's temporarily become an empty-headed blonde bimbo.

There's actually a grim truth to this. When crossdressed, many show an indecisiveness, a passivity, even an absent-mindedness they normally don't have. At support group meetings, conversations sometimes seem forced. There are a lot of embarrassed silences; we sit around not knowing what to say. No one seems to want to take charge, and it's hard to plan anything or get anyone to make a commitment.

Why? Because of "Gender Intoxication."

Being en femme can be just as intoxicating as alcohol, marijuana, or any other drug. I'm not a biochemist, but it seems there's some kind of release of brain endorphins when crossdressed. The senses are impaired, conversations become harder to follow. Erotic self-absorption is magnified, and logical reasoning is diminished. One is constantly self evaluating: checking oneself out in mirrors or redoing makeup. And on a more sensual level, luxuriating in the feel of feminine garments, perfume, jewelry and other accouterments of womanhood.

But this creates a dangerous contradiction. When one is out en femme in public, one needs to be twice as alert mentally. There's the ever-present danger of being read, social embarrassment, even the threat of physical harm. But precisely by being crossdressed, one is in a dreamy state and less able to handle such conflicts. Why else do we hear so many horror stories of crossdressers who lock their keys in the car or run out of gas?

The solution is to Understand The Intoxication. When going out in public, one needs to do less demanding things, and be prepared to do everything more slowly. In fact, one should consider doing only half of one's frenzied plans. Too often there's a sense of, "I don't get many chances to be out en femme, so I gotta do as much as I can." Wrong! Keep it simple.

It's like alcohol, to be indulged in judicious doses. Responsible crossdressers "know when to say when."

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Me and My Big Mouth

By Ricky

It has been brought to my attention more than once that I have a big mouth. I'm sure that you, my readers, have remarked on my talent for fearlessly offering opinion and advice from behind the safety of the printed page. Unlike talking, where my pontifications can be challenged by a loud, "Oh yeah, that's what you say!", if someone out there wants to comment they have to take the time to compose their thoughts, put them on paper, find a stamp and mail the thing. In practice this means I go unchallenged from the Olympian heights of my keyboard, royally assuming my wisdom has been heard and accepted by the masses, who obviously base their life's path on my precepts.

That is, until I have to put my advice into practice in my own personal life. There have been two major changes in my life recently. After 24 years my wife and I have called it quits, for reasons that have nothing to do with my crossdressing. I find myself singularly unprepared for the whole dating scene. I mean, dating is for teenagers with raging hormones and not for 46 year old bearded crossdressers with raging hormones. First of all it's hard to find a date. After all, most of my friends are already married, and the relationships with those that aren't are already set in a non-romantic mode. Suddenly those ads in the "getting personal" columns that were so funny to read have a new relevance, and feeling like a fool, I sent off a few letters. And no, I didn't mention my penchant for petticoats in the letter. So much for starting out with pure, unadulterated honesty.

Then the agonizing questions started. Do I stop shaving my legs? Are all the crossdressing magazines removed from the toilet tank in case I bring her home? What if I like her? How do I tell her? I know I have told my readers you have to tell the lady before you get serious, but I don't want to! I mean, it's scary! I don't want to be rejected, ridiculed or reviled. Anyway, I was saved from making this choice because the first date was a disaster. She had more makeup on her face than I have cumulatively worn in my entire life (this for a picnic!) and I got maybe 16 words out of her over a 3 hour date. Whew. But the next date is in two weeks. Let me see, should I stop shaving my legs or....

Then there is the question of telling the children. I thought I was safe from this one. After all, my kids are grown and they already know. What I had neglected to consider is that grown kids have a tendency to have kids of their own. That's right, my daughter is making me a grandperson, for lack of a better non-gender specific word. I have always threatened to be the kind of grandparent my parents were, spoiling the kids rotten while they had them then letting Mom and Dad live with the consequences. There is only one problem with this scenario. My daughter is living with me while she goes to college, and I will have to live with the consequences. In fact she has another 4 years to her masters degree, and with the father in school also that means I will be helping raise my grandbaby until almost school age.

I must admit the idea of holding a baby to my artificially enhanced breast is very appealing. What could make a person feel more feminine? But there are those consequences to deal with, and the decision is made more complicated since this is not my baby, but theirs. They accept me, but will this extend to the baby? We haven't discussed it yet, after all she isn't even showing yet, but the topic has to come up over the next seven or eight months. Anybody know a good advice columnist I can consult? (This article originally appeared in Cross-Talk, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)

Tri-Ess E-Mail

For identification purposes, when communicating via E-Mail to any Society leader or Society member, include as the FIRST item in the 'Subject' line of your E-Mail either "SSS:" or "Tri-Ess:," then follow with the usual brief description of the content of your E-Mail. This will immediately alert your recipient that this is Society material, and not just some unwanted 'hard-sell' or pornographic material that we all receive on a daily basis and usually trash before reading. E-Mail communications are becoming a most important part of quick and immediate Society contacts, so a method of identifying that an E-Mail is from a Society Sister is becoming more-and-more necessary.

TRAVEL TIME

by Melanie Yarborough

As crossdressers, we sometimes find ourselves anxious and even irritable as we're getting dressed-up and made-up. And after a meeting or large transgender convention, we have a hard time coming down from the gender euphoria. These two things aren't just coincidence. In fact, they're both part of the same process: a process I'd like to call TRAVEL TIME.

It takes time and energy to "get to" one's femme self. Make-up application is a painstaking process; we're often never completely satisfied with the results. Coordinating a blouse and skirt (or dress) with hose, shoes, purse, jewelry and makeup also requires intense focus. Most of us have never had the advantage of having been teenage girls and young women with years of fashion experimentation behind us. And even more importantly, as we get ready, we're almost swooning with emotional and yes, even erotic anticipation. It's a heady state to be in!

After the evening or event is over, it takes time and energy to "leave" one's femme self. When we take off the makeup or slip off the dress, we revert to the beard-stubbled masculine face and plain trousers. It's almost with a profound sense of disappointment. It's like we're leaving the Promised Land, or that we've left the best part of ourselves behind.

Crossdressers need to know and appreciate the pressures of TRAVEL TIME. We may find ourselves becoming more annoyed and snappish with our spouses and partners while getting ready, and not know why. We need to recognize the dislocations of going from masculine to feminine. The frustration of unfamiliarity with female accouterments, and the fervent desire to look our best, could cause aggression to be displaced onto a hapless companion.

Conversely, spouses and partners need to give the crossdresser the space necessary to get into character. Many women admittedly aren't comfortable with transgender in general. They may find themselves in passive-aggressive behavior: finding fault, becoming cold or sarcastic, and so on. Women also need to look within themselves to recognize and validate any negative feelings they may have. And both parties need to dialogue, dialogue, dialogue!

Transgender requires TRAVEL TIME to get to and depart from. We're all passengers together on this ride. Let's try to make it as pleasant (or at least as painless) as we can.

(This article originally appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter and is reprinted by permission of the author.)

First Transgender Named Co-Chair of a National LGBT Organization

by Phyllis Randolph Frye

The Eighth Lavender Law Conference, sponsored by the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, was held in Boston during 17-17 October. NLGLA is both bisexual and transgender inclusive in its by-laws. NLGLA is the only queer law association affiliated with the American Bar Association.

On 17 October, at its Closing Plenary, the NLGLA elected as its Co-Chairs for the 1998-1999 term, Ms. Melinda Whiteway of Santa Cruz CA and Mr. Jim Swartz of Chicago IL. **Melinda Marie Whiteway is the first transgender to be elected co-chair of a national lgbt organization.**

The Lavender Law Conference was a roaring success with over 300 attorneys, law students and other queer rights activists in attendance. Over 50 workshops were presented, fully incorporating LGBT issues and LGBT concerns & LGBT panelists.

Significant was a by-laws change that now allows affiliated local, or regional, queer law associations to have a full directorship on the Board of NLGLA. This is a significant step in NLGLA's moving towards becoming an organization of queer law organizations, giving a national voice to the local and regional queer law groups, and providing an inroad of queer law concerns to the American Bar Association. Also significant was the placement of transgenders on the new NLGLA Board. They include, in addition to Melinda Whiteway, the following:

- Kim Coco Iwamoto, Law Student at Univ. of New Mexico
- Spencer Bergstedt, Seattle, Washington
- Diana Cicotello, Aurora, Colorado
- Sharon Stuart, representing the Transgender Law Conference ICTLEP Phyllis Randolph Frye, Houston, Texas.

The next Board Meeting will be in Los Angeles on Feb 6-7 during the American Bar Association Mid-year Meeting. Following that the Board will meet in Atlanta on Jul 30 - Aug 1 during the American Bar Association Annual Meeting. NLGLA Board meetings are open.

The next Lavender Law Convention will be Oct 22-24 in Seattle, WA. For information about how you may join and become active in the NLGLA, contact either Melinda at melindamw@aol.com or Jim at attyjls@aol.com or the NLGLA web page (give the new leaders a few weeks to update it) at www.nlgla.org. For information on the next Lavender Law in Seattle, contact Spencer at mstrspence@aol.com.

Crossdressing In Brazil: Behind The Glitter

by Melanie Yarborough

Carnival in Rio di Janeiro. Men appear in high heels, fishnet stockings, ruffle-and-lace dance hall girl outfits, with lips smeared with bright lipstick and wearing thick layered wigs. An Argentine visitor once called it "a Promised Land of promiscuity, flirtation, and everyday variants of debauchery". What crossdresser hasn't seen pictures of Carnival and sighed, "This is the Promised Land"? But like most images, there is a more complex reality behind the feathers and sequins.

Brazilian crossdressing has its roots in theater. Over 200 years ago, women prohibited from acting, as the theater was seen as an immoral place not fit for ladies. (Machista Portuguese society kept women out of most other professions as well). As a result, men played the roles of young gypsy girls, crinoline princesses, Little Bo-Peep shepherdesses, etc. Later, transvestism went from the stage to the street. Many non-actors (straight and gay) began to crossdress for fun or to make a statement. Jorge Amado's classic novel, "Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands," opens with just such a scene.

In the twentieth century, transgender theater evolved into elaborate stage and television shows. Transvestites Ltd., Les Girls, and Rio Gay are several revues which employ professional writers, directors, and technicians. The themes may seem a little frivolous and stereotypical, but they are widely enjoyed by the public. They have made crossdressing an institution and - within limits - acceptable public entertainment. Certainly more so than in the United States.

There are also several famous transgendered actresses in Brazil. Roberta Close once made the cover of Argentine magazines and was hailed as "an example of the beauty and sensuality of Brazilian women." In one advertisement for women's clothing, she appeared in a low-cut dress and advised people (tongue-in-cheek) to "not be taken in by appearances." Andrea deMaio is another transgendered entertainer who claims to have received love letters from many men.

Why does Brazil's Carnival have such a strong crossdressing component? Carnival was originally adapted from the European pre-Lent spring festival, but with a Brazilian twist. Carnival became the final explosion of wildness and celebration before the solemn Lenten repentance, the dance before death. Traditional norms were turned inside-out in an "anything goes" atmosphere. People live out their fantasies of seeing how the other half lives. The poor imitate the rich. And men slip into wives' or girlfriend's clothing and become women. Some men skillfully impersonate famous actresses and singers, and there is a prize for best costume.

Yet there is a dark underside to crossdressing in Brazil. The police have often persecuted street crossdressers and transvestite prostitutes. In 1976, during the years of military rule, the Sao Paulo police chief decreed that crossdressers in public were to be arrested on charges of vagrancy or immoral soliciting. Moreover, they were to be photographed in their femme clothing for evidence to be used against them. In 1979, a police commissioner named Richetti was quoted as saying that he found crossdressers "more offensive" than homosexuals, as homosexuals were in many cases more discreet and not openly transgendered. When certain crossdressers got writs of habeus corpus to carry in their purses, some police ripped the writs up in their faces.

Facing this intense persecution, many transgendered Brazilians emigrated to Europe, particularly to Paris and Rome. There they found a somewhat more tolerant atmosphere. Lora, one Brazilian transgenderist, said in 1982, "Here [in France] they call me Madame, while in Brazil we are treated like animals".

The political left has also had qualms with the transgender and gay rights movement. Gay men and crossdressers were involved in the political opposition to military government. While the Left often welcomed them into their ranks, they made it clear that sexual and gender issues were deviationist, distracting attention from proletarian issues. In one extreme case, a gay crossdressing activist named Tais was beaten up by four leftist militants. They accused him of trying to "divide the proletariat" and warned him to stop "this impudence of a homosexual movement".

In the United States, the homosexual, crossdressing and transsexual communities see themselves as distinct. Each has their own issues, resources, and agendas. They often go out of their way to distance themselves from the other two groups. However, in Brazil and the rest of Latin America, there isn't this separation. The public and the government have a limited exposure to new ideas, and traditional machismo rules. A transsexual, a heterosexual crossdresser, and a drag queen all look pretty much the same to them. And the poverty and economic chaos in these countries makes it impossible for each group to be separate. They have to work collectively and pool their resources.

Behind the carnival glitter of Brazilian crossdressing, there are many contradictions. It's okay for a man to be dressed as a woman on the stage, but not in the street. It's okay to do it as a burlesque of women, but not as a lifestyle. In the United States transgender community, we need to be aware of this different reality for our Brazilian sisters.

(Reprinted from the "Neutral Corner" newsletter.)

Transvestism, Transgenderism, and Deuteronomy 22:5

By Elisabeth Anne Kellogg

A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this. (Deut. 22:5)

One verse that every transgendered person needs to come to terms with is Deut. 22:5. This verse seems to be a direct condemnation of cross-dressing. But, as has been asked before, aren't they just clothes? What does this verse really mean?

In researching this, I found one commentator who used Deut. 22:5 as an opportunity to recount the anecdote of following a car containing a man dressed in woman's clothes and a woman dressed in men's clothes. He used this as a springboard for an "isn't it sad the state American culture is in" sermonette. I won't embarrass the author by naming him. (At least I would have been embarrassed if I had written it.). This type of insightless commentary, where it is so obvious that the writer hasn't even bothered to crack the cover of the Hebrew scriptures, not only doesn't help, but it is positively harmful.

I hope that in the following, I can do better than that.

A surface reading of this text would lead the reader to the same conclusion as the commentator in the NIV Study Bible [1]: "Probably intended to prohibit such perversions as transvestism and homosexuality, especially under religious auspices. The God-created differences between men and women are not to be disregarded."

Most serious commentators on this verse, however, try to look for something more significant than taking issue with the kind of clothes people choose to wear.

The commentator in the NIV Matthew Henry Commentary [2] notes the following about verses 5-12 of this chapter. "Here are several laws in these verses which seem to stoop very low, and to take cognizance of things common and minute." With reference to verse 5 he says, "Probably this exchange of garments had been used to gain opportunity of committing uncleanness, and is therefore forbidden."

Walter R. Roehrs [3] goes on to suggest that, "Wearing apparel of the opposite sex was an 'abomination to the Lord' because it was the vogue among the Canaanite fertility worshipers."

The writer in the International Bible Commentary [4] notes that, "Within living memory, this verse has been cited against the wearing of trousers by women; yet there has been no corresponding refusal to wear rayon/cotton or terylene/worsted mixtures (see Deut. 22:11). The practice referred to may have been thought to have magical effects. There is certainly evidence of transvestism and simulated sexual inversion being associated in the ancient world (as well as today) with sexual license—and in a religious context.

So is there more to be gotten out of this than a condemnation of cross-dressing on the grounds of sexual license and sympathetic magic? John H. Walton and Victor H. Matthews [5] note, "Just as clothing served as a status marker in the ancient world, it also distinguished gender. In classical contexts, cross-dressing occurred in the theater, where women were not allowed to perform, and was also an aspect of homosexual practice. Most instances in which cross-dressing or transvestism are mentioned in ancient Near Eastern texts are cultic or legal in nature. For instance, when the Ugaritic hero Aqhat is murdered, his sister Paghat puts on a male garment under her female robes in order to assume the role of blood avenger in the absence of a male relative. An Assyrian wisdom text contains a dialogue between husband and wife who propose to exchange their clothing and thus assume each other's gender roles. This may be a fertility rite or perhaps a part of a religious drama honoring a goddess. It may be this association with other religions that made transvestism an 'abomination' in Deuteronomy, but the issue may also be the blurring of gender distinctions. Hittite texts use gender-related objects as well as clothing in a number of magical rites used to influence one's sexual status or diminish or alter the gender status of an adversary. The objects of the female where mirror and distaff; those of the male, various weapons."

What about this issue of "gender role?" The first thing to note is that the two places the word "clothing" appear in the translation of this verse are really two different words in the Hebrew original. "Men's clothing" represents the Hebrew "kelinever" which means "all of the things of manhood", i.e. clothes, armor, weapons, tools, etc. "Women's clothing" represents the Hebrew word "simlath" which was the square mantel that women wore. These two terms are paired in a list in 1 Kings 10:25 where in the NIV the translation is "robes and weapons." Therefore a better translation of this verse might be:

A woman must not wear men's gear, nor a man wear wom-

en's robes, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this. This seems to imply that what we are talking about in this verse is not clothing, but the masculine and feminine roles of protector and homemaker. It is possible that one motivation for this condemnation was to prevent men from hiding among the women to avoid their civic duty just as in 1 Sam. 10:17-24 Saul hid himself among the baggage.

C. F. Keil [6] directly addresses this meaning. "... the divine distinction of the sexes, which was kept sacred in civil life by the clothing peculiar to each sex, was to be not less but even more sacredly observed. 'There shall not be man's things upon a woman, and a man shall not put on a woman's clothes.' Keil does not signify clothing merely, nor arms only, but includes every kind of domestic and other utensils (as in Ex 22:6; Lev. 11:32; 13:49). The immediate design of this prohibition was not to prevent licentiousness, or to oppose idolatrous practices; but to maintain the sanctity of that distinction of the sexes which was established by the creation of man and woman, and in relation to which Israel was not to sin. Every violation of wiping out of this distinction—such even, for example, as the emancipation of a woman—was unnatural, and therefore an abomination in the sight of God."

Based on these interpretations, this verse no longer stands alone as a condemnation of violations in dress code. Instead it fits into a group of verses dealing with gender roles. It is not about transvestism. It's about transgenderism.

At this point there is some value in gathering the main "Male and Female" passages together in one place. Some of them are from the Old Testament and some from the New Testament.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:27)

Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard. (Lev. 19:27)

A woman must not wear men's gear, nor a man wear women's robes, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this. (Deut. 22:5)

Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and be-

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cause of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God. (1 Cor. 11:4-16)

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored. (1 Cor. 14:33b-38)

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. (1 Tim. 2:11-12)

The commands of these passages may be summarized with the following table:

Men

May not shave their heads. (Lev. 19:27)
May not have long hair. (1 Cor. 11:4-16)
May not trim their beards. (Lev. 19:27)
May not pray with head covered. (1 Cor. 11:4-16)
Forbidden to avoid military service. (Deut. 22:5)
May not enter female occupations, specifically be a homemaker. (Deut. 22:5)

Women

May not shave their heads. (1 Cor. 11:4-16)
May not have short hair. (1 Cor. 11:4-16)
May not pray with head uncovered. (1 Cor. 11:4-16)
Should remain silent in church. (1 Cor. 11:4-16)
May not have authority over a man. (1 Tim. 2:11-12)
Barred from military service. (Deut. 22:5)
May not bear arms. (Deut. 22:5)
May not enter male occupations. (Deut. 22:5)

It should be noted concerning a man's hair that the rule of the Nazarite violated two of these commands. He was to grow his hair long (Num. 6:5) and afterwards was to shave his head (Num. 6:18). Also, the tonsure of medieval monks would have violated Lev. 19:27.

Today few, if any, of these rules are enforced by even the most conservative churches. The twentieth century saw the abandonment of head coverings by the Catholic Church. Among all but the very conservative, female pastors and priests are allowed. This last is an area worthy of discussion at another time.

Lawrence O. Richards [7] writes, "In most cases the OT civil laws governing the rights of men and women reflect cultural patterns. They fall short of what many believe to be a deserved "equality." But it is important to remember that no culture provides equality. Injustices exist in every culture. And OT law was not a perfect expression of God's ideal for the whole human race (Mt. 5:21-43). OT law was an accommodation, bringing righteousness as close as possible to men and women who lived in a world in which all things were tainted and twisted by sin."

Many of the rules that Paul imposes on men and women above are reflections of practices in the Jewish Synagogue. For example, "The woman does not read out of theTorah, for the sake of the honor of the congregation." In contrast to this, it was also Paul who wrote,

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:26-29)

Richards continues [8], "With the gospel came the announcement that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28). This proclamation insists that there is spiritual equality in God's sight, despite those cultural distinctions made in every society. Yet believers remain male and female, slave and free. And each must live out his or her life within roles imposed by society as well as within the believing community.

"For the church, the teaching of the gospel is a challenge to become the kind of community that Scripture says we are—one that values persons apart from their social role. For the woman today, the teaching of the gospel is a challenge to be comfortable with herself as a female. A woman, because she is significant in Christ, can find worth and dignity by living life as a woman— without a need to act like a man."

I would expect Richards would be willing to expand this section to include, "For the man today, the teaching of the gospel is a challenge to be comfortable with himself as a male. A man, because he is significant in Christ, can find worth and dig-

nity by living life as a man—without a need to act like a woman." And this is where the real issue for the transgendered begins. How can the transgendered, whether male or female, be comfortable with himself/herself within his/her gender? To address this issue it is necessary to understand who and what a transgendered person is.

The transgendered person is usually not homosexual. The stereotype of the gay drag-queen is exactly that, a stereotype. Although a few cross-dressing homosexuals exist, they are rare compared to the number of heterosexual transgendered people. If transgendered people spend a lot of time at gay bars, it's because they find more acceptance there than they do in the "straight" world.

The transgendered person is not sick. Mental health professionals state publicly that transvestism is not a mental illness. It might be a fair statement, though, to say that any kind of transvestism represents some relationship defect in a persons life and so is a reflection of sin. People who cross gender lines in dressing can be classed into four categories.

The fetishist transvestite receives sexual stimulation from women's clothing and this stimulation is the reason for cross-dressing. For the fetishist transvestite there is the brokenness in relationships that comes from valuing things (articles of clothing) more than people.

The transsexual suffers from gender dysphoria, a condition where it is difficult or impossible for the individual to operate in the traditional roles of his gender. In extreme cases, the sufferer of gender dysphoria may receive hormone treatments and surgery in an attempt to conform the body to the desired gender. For the transsexual, cross-dressing does not produce sexual stimulation. Instead it is used as a way to feel like they fit in to the desired gender. Belonging is the most important motivator, and being forced to return to the birth-gender role can be emotionally traumatic for them. This shows a deep-seated brokenness with self, and often there are problems of low self esteem. Sometimes this brokenness can be healed in the gender of birth; sometimes it can only be healed by transitioning to the gender of choice. Here the challenge is to find healing in a way that does not destroy the sufferer's relationships with those around him, especially family and friends. Often the result of this struggle is divorce, with its accompanying problems. This happens even though most transsexual people highly value these relationships and morn their passing. Another deep-seated problem is with the transition process itself. Many transsexuals have trouble following the Benjamin Standards of Care. There are many cases of abuse of illegal hormones, overdosing on prescription hormones and going off-shore for surgery.

The dual role transvestite, also known as androgynous, is like the transsexual except that the gender dysphoria is not strong enough to be debilitating. This type of transvestite feels relatively comfortable functioning in both male and female roles. Here all that has been said about the transsexual's brokenness applies with the addition that the dual role transvestite is more likely to reach a compromise to preserve existing relationships while still allowing some expression of the "other-genderedness." In some cases the compromise is to make a feminine gesture of sacrificing happiness for the sake of others.

Certain members of the fashion counter-culture also dress in transgender clothes with no attempt to fit into the opposite gender role. Generally they try to make a fashion statement by wearing skirts. Properly this group does not belong to the transgender community. Here a brokenness exists with society where an attempt is made to be non-conformist.

So how can the transgendered, whether male or female, be comfortable with himself/herself within his/her gender? There is sin in the life of every transgendered person, just as there is sin in the life of every "normal" person. And the solution is faith in Jesus Christ, just as it is for every "normal" person.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Rom 3:21-26)

Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Eph 2:3b-9)

First justification comes through faith. When the relationship with God has been repaired (justification) in Christ, then the Holy Spirit begins to work healing (sanctification) in the life of the transgendered person. The power for this comes through

the Word, in the community of the church. It is to the church that the transgendered need to turn for help in healing the relationships that sin has broken in their lives, relationships with others and with self.

There is some value in comparing the transgender issues of today to the women's movement of the twentieth century. The women's movement was militant and political. This is in many ways the opposite of the transgenderism. The transgendered usually want nothing better than to conform and blend in. The desire is to just be "one of the girls." And with advances in hormone therapy and sexual reorientation surgery, this is becoming more practicable. Where this is not possible, there is a tendency for the transgendered person to "stay in the closet."

This means that the approach the church needs to take is different than dealing with women's issues. Where many churches develop women's programs toward empowerment, transgender programs need to provide safe places to draw out the feelings, the hopes and fears, of participants. There needs to be a support system for wives and others in close relationship with the transgendered. There needs to be a support system to help the transitioning deal with Standard of Care issues. And there needs to be opportunities given for the constructive expression of cross-gender feelings that make each one feel valued in both the gender of birth and the gender of choice. What the church needs to bring is compassion, not condemnation.

The real question is whether the church will be willing to aid in that healing. If the church withholds the word of the gospel until the transgendered have fixed the sin in their lives, that healing will never happen. Happily it is the Holy Spirit that provides the real healing through the words, "Christ died for you."

Notes:

[1] NIV Study Bible, (Grand Rapids, The Zondervan Corporation, 1985), p. 270
[2] Church, Leslie F. and Peterman, Gerald W., editors, The NIV Matthew Henry Commentary In One Volume, (Grand Rapids, The Zondervan Corporation, 1992), p.201
[3] Roehrs, Walter R. and Franzmann, Martin H., Concordia Self-Study Commentary, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1979), p. 134
[4] Bruce, F. F., editor, The International Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 273
[5] Walter, John H. and Matthews, Victor H., The IVP Bible Background Commentary Genesis-Deuteronomy, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1997), p.251
[6] Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F., Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, vol. I - The Pentateuch (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), pp.409f
[7] Richards, Lawrence O., Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), p. 428.
[8] ibid, p. 430

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You can e-mail me at LisbethK24@hotmail.com

An Angel wrote...

Many people will walk in and out or your life,
but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.
To handle yourself, use your head,

To handle others, use your heart.
Anger is only one letter short of danger.
If someone betrays you once, it's his fault,
if he betrays you twice, it's your fault.
Great minds discuss ideas;
Average minds discuss events;
Small minds discuss people.

God Gives every bird its food,
but He does not throw it into its nest.

He who loses money, loses much;
He who loses a friend, loses more;
He who loses faith, loses all.

Beautiful young people are acts of nature,
but beautiful old people are works of art.

Learn from the mistakes of others.
You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.
The tongue weighs practically nothing,
but so few people can hold it.

Friends, you and me..
..you brought another friend...
and then there were three...
we started our group..
..our circle of friends...
and like that circle..
..there is no beginning or end.

Keep this going. Send all your friends this message.
Send it to all those friends you never met,
Those you have...and those you've lost along the way.

Here is an Angel sent to watch over you. In order for him to work you must pass this on to the people you want watched over.

My Spirit

by Brandi Welch

First and foremost, I am a country girl. I live on five acres north of Houston. Second, I am an Indian Princess, in mind and spirit. I live in the country and work and play in Houston. I get my country (Indian) spirit from my Dad, who was raised on the high plains of the Texas panhandle. I get my city (social) spirit from my Mom, who was born and raised in Houston. I am truly a half breed. I am a country girl, but feel the city always calling me to her glittering lights. My Dad was raised far from the lights and sounds of a big city. My Mom was born under those lights. My spirit loves the two, combining both to make my essence complete. Whenever I feel the pressures of either the city or country, I retreat to the other. The country gives me the solace to reflect on life in general and map out my path down the transgendered highway. The city gives me the friendship and support network I need to make the journey down that road. Truly each spirit complements the other. I wouldn't be able to survive without either spirit.

Living in the country, for this half-breed, brings on solitude with nature, calling all wildlife friends and neighbors. Just being with the trees and animals brings relaxation, making thoughts crystal clear and plans cemented in my mind. Giving in to my desire to be around friends, I head to H town, where I share life's ups and downs with like spirited people. Gazing at Houston's evening skyline, I see the awe and wonder a big city draws. I again find solitude mingling with people from all walks of life, trying to get ahead, out on the town or just enjoying big city life. A big city brings out people with diverse backgrounds. Loneliness drives them to seek out their own kind. What gels them together into friends and a community? I would have to say their spirit, that invisible essence that makes up WHO you are.

How can a community survive without inhabitants? Answer: it can not. Every community needs leaders and followers to make it. I have been Facilitator (President) of Houston's Tri Ess chapter, Tau Chi, for three going on four years. Although I am considered a leader, I think otherwise. I don't see myself as a leader. I see a person that wants to be free and give others the same choice. In the three years I have been in "office," I have seen the spirit of Houston's transgender community change, being more friendly, more open, more understanding. I have seen the "burying of the hatchet." Our transgender community is not the fragmented minority it was a few years ago. In the last few years, I have seen unity bestow oneness on Houston. Each organization fills a niche. Members often have multi organization memberships. This says a lot about the various groups' leaders. I truly can say they are all my friends. Being a half-breed, one would think of me as an outsider. Far from it! My Indian spirit warms the city just as it does my tipi. The easy going, playful attitude of this Plains Indian, shows through and glows.

I think a lot of my ancestors and their "wild" ways. But I look deeper and see how they were at peace with nature and God and themselves. Native American Indians were a peaceful, loving people. The trouble started when the white man started taking. Yes, taking. Taking their land, their memories, their way of life.. Crossdressers, Transgenderists, and Transsexuals all know what it is like to have someone tell them how to live their lives. Like my Indian forefathers, we are fighting back. Not with bows and arrows or war paint. But by being vocal in our beliefs that this country is the land of the free. Free from oppression. Yeah, tell that to the descendants of the great Indian nations that were forced to the badlands of Oklahoma. Marching to a strange land, starving and freezing or dying of white man's disease on the way. Oppression. Yes, we still see it every day.

"Custer had it coming", the bumper sticker states. I firmly believe that. The Native Americans were backed into a corner, by land and money hungry settlers. All they had left was a fight to the death. Being fired from your job because of your views is not right. But do we have it coming? No, we don't have to. The reason the Red man lasted so long is that they were united. The tribes of North America fought, along with allied tribes, each other before the paleface came. To the native plains Indians, fighting was a game, even to the death. The U.S. Calvary soon found that out. We can take example from the plains Indians on

what they fought for and with whom. A way of life. That's what started the great Indian wars. Small words that go a long way. We fought the British over a way of life. We called it taxation without representation. Most of the world is, at some point, fighting for or over a way of life. It's called freedom.

My spirit, my half-breed spirit, my country girl spirit all go back to the simple life of the Plains Indians before the wars with the White Man. Back to a time when braves and chiefs wore earrings in slits in their ears. Back to a time when the finest dresses was made from doe skin or elk. Back to a time before make-up, when a squaw's natural beauty flowed from her soul like a canoe on a still lake. Smooth, flowing and pure. My heart, like the Plains Indians' heart, searches for truth and understanding. The government's representatives, when sent to sign peace treaties, were outwitted and basically tongue lashed by the Great Indian chiefs. It is hard to outwit a person who speaks the truth and lives by it.

Native. What do you think of when you hear the word native? How about native son or native Houstonian or "the natives are restless?" I think of my forefathers, as they roamed the plains, secluded in their beliefs, their customs, their life. To us, their life was simple. But to them, it was a fight every day, a fight for food, shelter and a place to call home. Strange as it may seem, I call Houston my home. It is my home town. It was my birthplace. I am a native Houstonian. A true Texan, who lives in the country, but knows her roots. I was born in Heights Hospital. My Mother was born in a house where, now, Loop 610 crosses over Fulton Street on the north side of town. It is ironic. My Mom's birthplace was torn down for progress and civilization, not unlike the Native American Indians' birthplace being taken in the name of frontier expansion. However, what is more ironic, my Dad's homeplace in the Panhandle is still standing and belongs to my uncle's family.

Years ago, when I was first exploring my gender gifted side, a friend and mentor told me to always be true to myself. That sounds like something an Indian elder would say, a saying that the Red Man would live by . Numerous times, in our fight to have equal rights and freedom, allies have let us down. But that shouldn't cause us to be untrue to our ideals, our spirit.

Traveling on moonlight nights, the trees sometimes block my view of the moon.

I know the moon is there, but I cannot see it. The trees are hiding the moon from me. Such is my spirit. I know it's there, but sometimes it hides itself from me. Times like these I reflect on who I am and where I am going. I feel lost, on the gender highway, but like the moon, my spirit comes to me in a flash of inspiration. Much like a full moon does when the trees give way to openings between them. Times like these I pull from the inside and let my country roots take over and guide me until my spirit returns. Such is so with our fight for rights. When we feel alone, we need to pull from the inside, until someone is there beside us to give support and help in the fight

Lately I have been feeling my country roots call to me. More and more I want to go country dancing. I did this every weekend, from the time I had my own truck until the time I married. I haven't been in years, but feel my spirit leading me this way. Am I being true to city spirit? Yes, as I feel that I wouldn't be whole without searching out all avenues, while I travel my highway.

I have again taken up reading books on Native American history. Right now, I am reading "From The Heart, Voices of the American Indian," edited by Lee Miller. "From Moctezuma and Pontiac to Crazy Horse and Chief Joseph - Eloquent Speeches from America's Indian Nations," this book is an inspiration for anyone. Reading this book is a calling. It is calling me to travel and search for the truth. Call it a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage to the Black Hills, Fort Laramie, Fort Phil Kearny and places where the Indian Wars were fought. Places with names like Sand Creek, Little Bighorn, Wounded Knee, Lame Deer, Powder River, Adobe Walls, and Soldier Springs. I feel being called there by my spirit. Just as I am on the gender highway, I know I will seek out these spiritual places and find my past, so I can find my future.

Another place where my Indian spirit searches, is the Bible. I was raised in a Southern Baptist family and hold the ideals of the Bible close to my heart. Ever since I have been searching my Indian spirit, my Bible learnings have led me. I have read about how the Native Americans were considered savages, and needed to be civilized and worship the Lord. Through my readings, I have found that I have came to conclude, that the Great Spirit that they always talked about, is my Lord. I don't read the Bible much. But when I do, I just open the good book and start reading. I have just reread Psalm 23. It struck me hard, as I read it again, what this meant, in my opinion, to our Native forefathers. It actually seems to have been written with them in mind. Just picture it: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want....." All that the Natives wanted, they had.

Then, the white man took all of it. Their whole essence, their SPIRIT. Houston , it seems, has all it could want in a Transgendered community. She has the spirit; let's keep it that way. Now, if we only could get a club in town like the Queen Mary. That would be awesome!

I will close now with a prayer I found on the Internet and lean on from time to time.

An Indian Prayer

O Great Spirit, Whose voice I hear in the winds,
And whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me!
I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold
the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.
Make me wise so that I may understand
the things you have taught my people.
Let me learn the lessons
you have hidden in every leaf and rock.
I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,
but to fight my greatest enemy—myself.
Make me always ready to come to you
with clean hands and straight eyes.
So when life fades, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.

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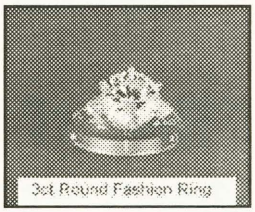

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Tri-Ess Pen Pals

Many sisters have written over the years to express their disappointment in not receiving replies to their letters to other Tri-Ess sisters. It seems that while some sisters are wonderfully prolific pen pals, others (for a variety of reasons) are not. To assist those who would like to receive lots of letters, we have compiled a "Pen-Pal List". All you have to do is promise to reciprocate. Just fill out and sign the form below and send it to:

Carol Beecroft
P.O. Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275

"I promise the courtesy of a reply to all correspondence from my Tri-Ess sisters."

Femme Name_____

Code Number_____

Here's how to write a Pen Pal through the Forwarding Service:

1) Write your letter to your chosen Pen Pal. Include your picture if you wish. If you choose not to include your own return address at first, be sure you include your own Code Number in your letter.
2) Place your letter in an envelope, affix correct postage, and lightly pencil in the name and Code Number of your Pen Pal on the front.
3) Place this envelope inside another envelope and address this outer envelope to:

Tri-Ess Forwarding Service
P.O. Box 194
Tulare CA 93275

4) Include your return address on the outer envelope and be sure to apply correct postage. Once received at the Forwarding Service, your inner envelope will be properly addressed to your Pen Pal and sent on its way. If or when you and your Pen Pal choose to exchange letters directly is up to you. Have fun, Sisters!

If you wrote us asking to be placed on the Pen Pal List and your name does not appear above, please write us again. We are sorry, but sometimes we do "drop the ball." (Or, in this case, the name!)

NEW!!! We have a sister who wants to be a Cyber-Space Pen Pal. Kimmie (FL-4532-D) says she loves answering her E-mail and would like to have you visit her Web Site, too. Her E-Mail address is: Kimmie_CD@aol.com Her Web site is at: http://members.aol.com/kimmiecd/index.html

List of Pen Pals

Now, here are the Pen Pals:

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AZ-3954-B Rebecca
CA-3800-M Charli
CA-1282-V Fran
CA-3354-N Michelle
CA-4249-F Shirley Louise
FL-2520-B Joan Ann
FL-3720-R Karen Rose
FL-4046-J Rita
IL-3623-G Nancy
MN-3996-L Carla
NC-3723-C Sherri
NJ-3818-L Carol Ann
NY-3433-T Donna
NY-3717-P Tammie
NY-4892-D Jackie
OH-1617-H Razilee
PA-3961-G Jayne
PJAY@juno.com *(E-Mail only)*
PA-4046-J Rita
TN-1230-H Rita
TX-4820-W Irene
VA-2642-I Madelyn
VA-3401-W Samantha
WI-4864-S Kathy
IN CANADA
PQ-4457-M Micheline
IN MEXICO
MX-4626-C Mariana

Phenomenal Woman

by Maya Angelou

Ed. Note: This Maya Angelou poem is being circulated to celebrate Women's History Month.

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies

I'm not cute or built to suit a model's fashion size

But when I start to tell them They think I'm telling lies.

I say It's in The reach of my arms

The span of my hips The stride of my steps The curl of my lips.

I'm a woman Phenomenally Phenomenal woman That's me.

I walk into a room Just as cool as you please

And to a man The fellows stand or Fall down on their knees Then they swarm around me A hive of honey bees. I say It's the fire in my eyes And the flash of my teeth The swing of my waist And the joy in my feet.

I'm a woman Phenomenal woman That's me.

Men themselves have wondered What they see in me They try so much But they can't touch My inner mystery. When I try to show them They say they still can't see. I say It's in the arch of my back The sun of my smile The ride of my breasts The grace of my style.

I'm a woman Phenomenally Phenomenal woman That's me.

Now you understand Just why my head's not bowed

I don't shout or jump about

Or have to talk real loud

When you see me passing It ought to make you proud. I say It's in the click of my heels The bend of my hair The palm of my hand The need for my care.

'Cause I'm a woman Phenomenally Phenomenal woman That's me.

I think each and every one of us is Phenomenal! I hope you liked this as much as I did.

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Honor Roll of Tri-Ess Donors

It is our intention to publish annually an Honor Roll of Tri-Ess Life Members, Sustaining Members, Benefactors and General Donors for the previous calendar year. Since this is the first time, our list will include all Life Members to date. Sustaining and Benefactor categories are new as of 1998. General Donors listed are for 1998. We wish to extend our warmest appreciation toward all those who have contributed beyond the minimum membership level. Their generosity toward their sisters is an inspiration to us all.

Life Members

Jane Ellen TX-1757-M
Frances TX-9001-M
Samantha TX-1435-W
Donna IL-1148-S
Lisa NV-4102-B
*Lee Frances MS-2125-H
*Judy Ann CA-1397-L
Michelle FL-1744-G
Denise FL-2746-S
*Carol CA-1012-B
*Virginia CA-1015-P
*Marlene CA-1046-L
Marlana AR-4310-C
Evelyn AR-9328-C
Julie Ann IL-4627-J
Ulla GM-1529-M
Joyce OH-1449-B
*Awarded by Board action

Sustaining Members -1998

Marcie TX-4804-D
Rebecca TX-9517-D
Victoria VA-4829-B
Cheri VA-9527-B
Ally AL-4940-H
Donna AL-9558-H
Peggy MI-3343-P
Alison RI-4436-L
Dottie RI-9370-L
Paula OK-4990-B

Benefactor

Jim CA-4756-B

General Donations -1998

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Dawn IL-4394-D
Helen TX-1556-G
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Geri CA-3670-T
Alice ID-4460-K
Ruth MN-1798-B
Nancy NJ-4546-F
Johnnie Sue NJ-2271-S
Maureen CO-1103-J
Sheena OM-4577-L
Pippin TN-1416-M
Denise NM-3709-B
Irene TX-4820-W
JoAnne CA-3380-D
Diane MD-4843-W
Shirlee AR-1812-K
Marilee TX-4871-J
Hope AZ-4167-R
Barbara Ann FL-4904-C
Donna PA-4906-D
Debbie GA-3951-M
Alyce CA-4660-F
Jeannette CA-2848-M
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Radene NV-2653-R
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Regina CA-4954-A
Heather TX-3409-H
Cynthia FL-3579-R
Kristen AZ-4704-S
Ellen VA-3857-A

Taking Roots In Your Community

by Allison Marsh

One of the nicest ways to profit from your gender organization activities is to be sure they are only a part of your life. Hopefully, your gender experiences are an adventuresome, educational, heart-warming, and enchanting part of life. But don't let them become your whole life.

Nearly all of us are working in a "company community" were there are opportunities to be of service to others in more ways than just to do your job. Employee credit union boards, work planning committees, social activity planning, chairing company or division charity drives, union committee persons, etc.

There are professional associations for just about every kind of work there is. Join one and become known within your occupational community as a person who is trying to improve standards and assist in educational enrichment of members. Become known beyond your own job.

When we get home, there are neighborhood associations, block watch programs, senior volunteer programs, youth group leadership positions as in Scouts, Campfire, etc., whether as board members, troop leaders, merit badge counselors, or whatever. There are youth teams to coach, school volunteers for outings or class "grandparents." The local Literacy Network is always in need of volunteer tutors for reading and simple arithmetic. There are adult councils to whom juvenile courts assign offenders for determination of corrective action to be taken.

There are service clubs like Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary. And within each of these are committee chairman and officer positions that need volunteers to fill them and projects to be done as sub-group participants.

Very few people with special gender interests ever make a career out of gender ACTIVITIES, just as very few basketball enthusiasts and amateurs make a living out of the game. And very few people whose life is chiefly wrapped up in their gender problems and activities are successful in achieving a happy, well-rounded life.

We all need to be something beside transvestites, transgenderists, or transsexuals. Even if our volunteering is confined to the broad scope of the gender community, try helping a group whose gender problems are different from yours. Resolution of our own gender issues is too small a basket to hold all our eggs, and too confined a space to satisfy all our emotions. Try to assure yourself that when your gender brings disappointment and frustration, that there are other parts of your life that are also important, which are going well.

No one respects us just because we are men or women or transgendered people. They respect us for what they know we contribute to others. For our unselfishness. For those are the things that make us important. This may be your best year to become more important.

Tri-Ess Helpline!

Do you have a question about Tri-Ess? Do you need help regarding media outreach in your area? Tri-Ess Executive Director Carol Beecroft may be reached at the Tri-Ess National Office in Tulare, California at:

(209) 688-9246

Carol is often available to speak to radio audiences via long-distance telephone hook-up, and she is compiling a list of members who are able to appear on radio or television, or speak before college classes.

Do you have a question about the Femme Mirror or other Tri-Ess publications and services? Tri-Ess Chair of the Board Jane Ellen Fairfax and Mirror Editor Frances Fairfax may be reached at:

(713) 349-8969

Are you interested in starting a Tri-Ess chapter? The new Tri-Ess Liaison for Chapter Support and Services, Judy Daniels, may be reached at:

(580) 226-9644

Does your local chapter have a Helpline? Ideally, each Tri-Ess chapter should operate a Helpline and list the number with the local Crisis Hotline, Gay Switchboard, Mental Health Clinics, etc. The expenses involved would vary with local phone rates and installation charges. As a second, unlisted line in a sister's home, a Helpline does not take a lot of money. What it does take is considerable dedication on the part of the sister volunteering to answer the Helpline. How about it, ladies? Does your chapter have a Helpline yet?

South OK / North TX Area
TAU OMEGA FORMING CHAPTER
P.O. Box 1922, Ardmore OK 73401
Phone (Judy Daniels): 580-226-9644
Michelle: musickmj@hotmail.com
http://www.geocities.com/
Wellesley/ Garden/2258/

Region 5 (Mid-West)

Chicago, IL Metro Area
CHI Chapter
P.O. Box 40, Wood Dale, IL 60191
Phone (Shelly): 708-383-1677
E-Mail: chitriess@aol.com
http://members.aol.com/
chitriess/trisss/chimain.htm

Minneapolis, MN Metro Area
BETA GAMMA
PO Box 49522 Minneapolis, MN 55449
Contact: Sharon MN-4041-0
Phone: 612-725-7112
E-Mail: betagamma@tri-ess.com
http://www.tri-ess.com

Southern MN- Northern IA Area
PI THETA FORMING CHAPTER
c/o K. Morgan
PO Box 74 , Kensett Iowa 50448
Contact: Kandice MN-4554-G
E-Mail: kplace@ruralamerica.net
http://www.mwpcdir.com/ptg.html

Wausau, WI Metro Area
FORMING CHAPTER
c/o Tri-Ess
PO Box 194, Tulare CA 93275
Contact: Frances Ann WI-4148-W
Phone: 715-845-3711

Springfield, MO Metro Area
SIGMA MU
P.O. Box 6187
Springfield MO 65801-6187
Contact: Rachel L'Amour
Hotline (Riki): 417-830-9950
E-mail: sigma_mu@usa.net
Website: http://members.tripod.com/~
Sigma_Mu/

Region 6 (Mid-Continental)

Denver CO Metro Area
DELTA
P.O. Box 11504, Denver, Co 80211
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E-Mail: dianetri@aol.com

New Mexico, So. Colorado, W. Texas
FIESTA CHAPTER
8200 Montgomery NE #241
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Contact: Vicky Anne NM-4734-A
Phone (Vicki): (505) 299-2533
E-Mail: VickyAnne@yahoo.com

Region 7 (Northwest)

Grants Pass, OR Metro Area
Rogue Valley Girls
RHO GAMMA
P.O. Box 5551, Grants Pass OR 97527
Contact: Lori OR-4319-L
Phone (Edward): 541-476-5577
E-Mail (Lori): loritris@terragon.com

Eureka, CA Metro Area
FORMING CHAPTER
c/o Tri-Ess
PO Box 194, Tulare CA 93275
Contact: Lois CA-2148-M

Moscow, ID Metro Area
FORMING CHAPTER
520 S. Hayes St., Moscow ID 83843-3424
Contact: Laurie Wolf ID-1704-W
Phone: 208-882-1564
E-Mail: Laurie@moscow.com

Region 8 (Southwest)

Los Angeles, CA Metro Area
ALPHA
Box 411352, Eagle Rock Station,
Los Angeles, CA 90041
Contact: Kathy Helms: (818) 352-9448
E-Mail (Janyne): jwcresap@earthlink.net
E-Mail (Stacy): stacy@usa.net
http://www.3dcom.com/tg/
alpha/ alpha.htm

Fresno, CA Metro Area
TRI CHI
P.O. Box 26593, Fresno, CA 93729-6593
Fresno Area and North: Phone Karyn CA-4273-H: 209-322-5078
or Angela CA-4750-P: 209-276-3424
E-Mail: trichi@eudoramail.com
Visalia Area and South:
Phone Carol CA-1012-B: 209-688-9246;
E-Mail (Marlene): TriChi1@aol.com
http://www.psnw.com/~huckfinn/
index.html

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ALPHA ZETA
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Cindy N. AZ-2817-N: 602-488-0959
E-Mail: sss@tri-ess.org
Web Site: http://tri-ess.org /alpha_za.htm

Tucson, AZ Metro Area
TAU UPSILON
8802 E Broadway Blvd.#145
Tucson, AZ 85710
Contact: Rebecca AZ-3954-B
Phone: 520-296-3472
E-mail Rebecca: cactusdwlr@aol.com
E-mail Robby: TauUpsilon@aol.com
http://members.aol.com/tauupsilon

Las Vegas, NV Metro Area
THETA UPSILON GAMMA
P.O. Box 42401, Las Vegas, NV 89116
Contact: Rosalind Doyle NV-2474-P
Phone: 702-387-3891
E-Mail: Roz@cybergal.com
Web site: http://www.geocities.com/
westhollywood/park/1880

Region 9 (Florida)

Orlando, FL Metro Area
PHI EPSILON MU
P.O. Box 3261, Winter Park, FL 32790
Contact: Alexis FL-3077-E
Phone: 407-382-8389
E-Mail: KellyFL@aol.com
Web Site: http://www.horizon-usa.com/
misc/fem.htm

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TRI-ESS Chapters and Forming Chapters

Region 1 (New England)

New York City Metro Area
CHI DELTA MU
P.O. Box 1, River Edge, NJ 07661-0001
Contact: Susan Lynette NJ-4142-W
Phone: 1-800-484-7593 (Code 4985)
E-Mail: cdm81@hotmail.com
Web site: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/7396/

Albany NY Metro Area
LAMBDA CHI LAMBDA
P.O. Box 97, Ilion NY 13357
Contact: Evelyn NY-3277-H

Buffalo, NY Metro Area
NU PHI CHI - Buffalo Belles
P.O. Box 1701, Amherst, NY 14226
Contact: Denise NY-3404-N
Phone: 716-446-2661
E-Mail(Kathy): buffalo_belles@juno.com
http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Village/3339/

Region 2 (Middle Atlantic/Ohio Valley)

Trenton, NJ Metro Area
SIGMA NU RHO
PO Box 9255, Trenton NJ 08650
Contact: Pat NJ-3524-H
Voice Mail: 609-392-1132
E-Mail: SNRTRIS@hotmail.com
Website: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/ Castro/3774

Northern Pennsylvania
Endless Mountain Girls
EPSILON MU GAMMA
P.O. Box 4, Three Bridges NJ 08887
Contact: Alice Harding NJ-4160-H
24-Hour Voice Mail: 717-364-2949
E-mail: emgtris@hotmail.com

Gouldsboro, PA Metro Area
FORMING CHAPTER
c/o Tri-Ess PO Box 194, Tulare CA 93275
Contact: Sue PA-2164-C

Northern Ohio, Western PA Area
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Sheffield Lake, OH 44054-0053
Elaine Lee OH-9034-B:216-556-0067
E-mail(Diane): info@triess-alphaomega.org
http://www.triess-alphaomega.org/

Lansing, MI Metro Area
LAMBDA MU
P.O. Box 246
Moline, MI 49335-0246
Annette MI-4290-B 616-752-8058
E-Mail: lambdamu@geocities.com
E-Mail Joanna: joannaMI@aol.com
Web site: http://www.lambdamu.com

Baltimore, MD Metro Area
CHI EPSILON SIGMA
P.O. Box 505, Brooklynville MD 21022
Contact: Grace MD-1856-R
E-Mail: tri_ess@hotmail.com
http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake_Tri_Ess

SECTIONS:
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CHI PI ALPHA SECTION
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PO Box 3469
York, PA 17402-3469
E-mail: tri_ess@hotmail.com

Northern Virgina Area
PI OMICRON TAU SECTION
Contact: Joan Henderson
PO Box 1728
Herndon, VA 20172
E-mail sloopjjb@aol.com

Richmond VA Metro Area
RHO IOTA CHI SECTION
Contact: Lucy Stone
PO Box 382, Norge, VA 23127
E-mail: Dalmy2@aol.com

Region 3 (Southeast)

Charlotte, NC Metro Area
KAPPA BETA
P.O. Box 12101, Charlotte, NC 28220
Phone (Sherri): 704-565-5034
E-Mail: infolady@kappabeta.org
Web site: http://www.kappabeta.org

Raleigh/Durham, NC Metro Area
SIGMA RHO DELTA
P.O. Box 61406, Raleigh NC 27661
Beverley NC-4268-B: 919-556-7884
E-Mail: sigmarhodelta@hotmail.com
http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/6299

Greensboro/Winston-Salem Area
TAU GAMMA
P.O. Box 25282, Raleigh NC 27611
Contact: Melissa NC-4534-E
E-Mail: TGTRIESS@juno.com
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Atlanta, GA Metro Area
SIGMA EPSILON
Box 272, Roswell, GA 30077
Contact: Lauren GA-3390-H: 770-552-
E-mail (Karen): Kerri_E@prodigy.con
http://pages.prodigy.com/ kerricd/sigep

Region 4 (Mid-South)

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TAU CHI
8880 Bellaire B2 Ste.104
Houston TX 77036
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E-Mail: JEFTRIS@aol.com
E-Mail (Brandi): bindian@lcc.net

Austin, TX Metro Area
ALPHA TAU
P.O. Box 1398, Georgetown TX 7862
E-mail (Heather): Mousehurd@aol.co
E-Mail (Lee): WZNU09B@prodigy.c
E-Mail (Robie): robie@pobox.com
http://www.angelfire.com/tx/atau/

Tri-Ess World Wide Web Sites

Alpha's (Los Angeles CA)
http://www.3dcom.com/tg/alpha/ alpha.htm
Alpha Omega's (Cleveland OH)
http://www.triess-alphaomega.org
Alpha Tau's (Austin TX)
http://www.angelfire.com/tx/atau
Alpha Zeta (Phoenix, AZ)
http://tri-ess.org/alpha_za.htm
Beta Gamma's (Minneapolis MN)
http://www.tri-ess.com
Chi Chapter's (Chicago IL)
http://members.aol.com/chitriess/trisss/chimain.htm
Chi Delta Mu's (New York City NY)
http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/7396/
Chi Epsilon Sigma's (Baltimore MD)
http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake_Tri_Ess
Judy Daniels'
http://www.angelfire.com/ok/judytriess/index.html
Kappa Beta's (Charlotte NC)
http://www.kappabeta.org
Lambda Mu's (Lansing MI)
http://www.lambdamu.com
Nu Phi Chi /Buffalo Belles (Buffalo NY)
http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Village/3339/
Phi Epsilon Mu's (Orlando FL)
http://www.horizon-usa.com/misc/fem.htm
Pi Theta Chapter's (Southern MN- Northern IA)
http://www.mwpcdir.com/ptg.html
Sigma Epsilon Chapter (Atlanta GA)
http://pages.prodigy.com/kerricd/sigep.htm
Sigma Mu (Springfield MO)
http://members.tripod.com/~Sigma_Mu/
Sigma Rho Delta's (Raleigh/Durham NC)
http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/6299
Tau Gamma's (Greensboro/Winston-Salem NC)
http://www.geocities.com/~tau_gamma
Tau Omega's (Ardmore OK)
http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/2258/
Tau Upsilon's (Tucson AZ)
http://members.aol.com/tauupsilon
Theta Upsilon Gamma's (Las Vega NV)
http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/park/1880
Tri Chi's (Fresno CA)
http://www.psnw.com/~huckfinn/ index.html
Tri-Ess International
http://www.firstnethou.com/brenda/tri-ess.htm
Tri-Ess Resources Page
http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Stonewall/6801/
Tri-Ess Traveling Girls' Directory
http://www.mwpcdir.com
SPICE
http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/SPICE.html
CDSO
http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/CDSO.html
Holiday En Femme 1999
http://www.firstnethou.com/brenda/holiday.htm

Poet's Corner

The ABCs of Friendship

A Friend....

(A)ccepts you as you are
(B)elieves in "you"
(C)alls you just to say "HI"
(D)oesn't give up on you
(E)nvisions the whole of you (even the unfinished parts)
(F)orgives your mistakes
(G)ives unconditionally
(H)elps you
(I)nvites you over
(J)ust "be" with you
(K)eeps you close at heart
(L)oves you for who you are
(M)akes a difference in your life
(N)ever Judges
(O)ffers support
(P)icks you up
(Q)uiets your fears
(R)aises your spirits
(S)ays nice things about you
(T)ells you the truth when you need to hear it
(U)nderstands you
(V)alues you
(W)alks beside you
(X)-plain things you don't understand
(Y)ells when you won't listen and
(Z)aps you back to reality

Tri-Ess-Sponsored CDSO Online Forum for Spouses and Partners of Crossdressers Signs 90th Subscriber!

Our subscription list for support of crossdressers' wives and significant others has signed its 90th subscriber! Operated by a wife, Beverly, the listserv is a forum for all genetic women involved with crossdressers. Subscription is free. It is not limited to spouses or partners who are members of Tri-Ess. However, it is "for women only" as there are many, forums available for transgendered men.

Now, a few words from Beverly:

Hi! Welcome to our very own support list for wives and/ or SO's of crossdressers. Just a few rules here....

1. NO postings, and NO subscriptions from crossdressers. Not your husbands or your boyfriends. This is for US.
2. No flames. If you disagree with an opinion please do so with courtesy and respect. Don't attack the person.
3. Those of you with strong, militant transsexual attachments, please move on. This list is not for you. If you'd like to E-mail me privately, I can pass on to you several addresses for support of SO's of transsexuals. There are many out there.
4. No advertisements! If you are in doubt about the acceptability of something, please forward it to me.
5. Many subscribers to this forum are uncomfortable seeing people crossdressed. For the comfort of all, transmission of crossdressing photos on the forum will not be allowed. Such transmission can be done by private e-mail, among consenting parties.

That's just about it for now. This list is still new. The rules may change along the way. If so, I will post a general announcement. If you have any suggestions, comments, or just want to talk.....feel free to E-mail me at CDSO@hotmail.com

Regards, Beverly

To subscribe to the list, send e-mail to: <LISTSERV@HOME.EASE.LSOFT. COM> with <SUBSCRIBE CDSO first name last name> as the message. You will receive confirmation from the listserv with complete instructions. Then, you may send a message to all the people currently subscribed to the list, by sending mail to a single address. **It's simple! It's fun! SIGN ON NOW, AND HELP SPREAD THE WORD TO ANY OTHER WIVES/SO'S YOU KNOW!**

Chapters On Line!

Does YOUR chapter have an e-mail address? We are receiving an increasing number of inquiries in response to Tri-Ess's Internet presence as well as to ads in gender community publications. Whenever possible we refer inquirers to the nearest local chapter. A Helpline or an E-Mail address makes the referral process much more efficient. To list your chapter's local E-Mail address or Helpline number, contact Jane Ellen Fairfax at JEFTRIS@aol.com

Freedom

by Melissa Dixon NC-4303-D

Freedom is a very difficult word to define. To some, freedom simply means that they have nothing left to lose. To others, it means not having to live under the control of a ruthless dictator. To many of us, freedom means that we can be who we are without fear of harassment and/or discrimination.

The irony of freedom is that it is not free, it comes with a price. Throughout history, people have been willing to stand up against tyranny and risk their lives to attain their freedom, and many of them paid the ultimate price so that others could be free.

There is an axiom in politics: "Numbers count." Politicians pay very close attention to the number of their constituents that are for or against a particular issue.

Many of you complain that the majority of the Gender Variant Activists are transsexuals, and therefore are not working for you, the crossdresser. Let me tell you that your complaint is wrong. Speaking as one of the very few activists that is also a crossdresser, you are not being ignored. Based on current estimates, the majority of the Gender Variant Community is comprised of crossdressers. If these estimates are accurate, it does not make sense that crossdressers are so poorly represented among the activists. Or is there another reason? Answer this two part question to decide why you are not involved. If you awoke tomorrow morning and everyone knew that you are a crossdresser and no one cared, would that be okay with you? Or, do you need your crossdressing to be a little naughty or possibly illegal for it to be okay with you?

The really important number is one, you. You are not attending any of the planning meetings. You are not willing to attend meetings with politicians and their staffs to present the issues of the crossdresser. You are not willing to attend meetings of your local Human Relations Commission to present the issues that face the crossdresser. I truly believe that the majority of local politicians would be interested in hearing from crossdressers. I have spent many hours on the telephone as well as in person discussing issues with a member of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Housing Authority, a City Attorney, my City Council person and a County Commissioner. I was not arrested, I was not harassed, I did not appear on the evening news nor was my photo in the newspaper. What I did get was informative, open and honest communication. These people did not want to tell everyone about me. The police are not watching my home or following me when I leave my home. Your fears are completely unfounded. You have more to fear leaving a shopping mall or your favorite restaurant or simply walking down the street.

Many of you complain that your presence is not welcomed, that the only thing that you are good for is donating money. If you attend a local activist group meeting with the expectation of being treated as if you are something special, then you probably should continue donating your money. The very first meeting that I attended was with national leaders. Not only was I a novice in the political arena, this was the first time that the real world had met Melissa. I did not encounter any negative attitudes, as a matter of fact, I made several good friends. However, I knew that I was the token heterosexual crossdresser. As I saw it, I had one of two paths to follow. I could whine and cry about being a token or I could get involved and earn the respect of the national leaders. It was my responsibility to earn their respect, just as it is your responsibility to earn the respect of the activists working in your city or state. In fairness to you, if you made a sincere effort to get involved with an It's Time America! chapter or affiliate and was told that your presence was not welcome, as an It's Time America! Director, I want to know about it. Be as specific as possible with names, dates, city/state, etc..

Are you willing to get involved? Are you willing to get your chapter involved? If you want laws that specifically address crossdressers, you must get involved. You are the only one that can answer the specific questions concerning crossdressers. You now have a choice of two paths to take. You can continue to whine and cry that the crossdresser is not being represented or you can get involved. The question to you is, "What are you willing to do to gain your freedom?".

If you want to get involved with an existing It's Time America! chapter or affiliate, or if you want to start an "It's Time America!" chapter in your state, or if you would like someone from an It's Time America! chapter or affiliate to speak at one of your support group meetings, send me an e-mail message at MelissaDixon@msn.com

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Tri-Ess Chapters

Fort Myers, FL Metro Area
GAMMA CHI BETA
P.O. Box 510045
Punta Gorda, FL 33051
Contact: Alexis FL-3077-E
Phone: 407-382-8389

Miami FL Metro Area
MU BETA GAMMA
PO Box 4126, Hialeah, FL 33014-1126
Contact: Barbara Ann
E-Mail: barbaraann1@juno.com
Phone: 1-305-653-8088

Region 10 (International)

Quebec City, PQ Metro Area
FORMING CHAPTER
BETA EPSILON LAMBDA
1050 Rue Orleans,Charlesbourg, PQ G1H 2H2
Contact: Micheline
Phone: 1-418-621-5032
Fax: 1-418-621-5092
E-Mail: milady@cmq.qc.ca

Overseas Coordinator
Eve Burchert
574 Golfview Dr.
Barrington IL 60010

Big Sister Report

by Marlene

I get about a dozen requests for a Big Sister each month. I currently have 46 Big Sisters corresponding with about 100 Little Sisters.

AK4320A Jo Ann (1)
AL4005J Saarah(1)
CA 4624C Melissa (3)
CA3413C Pricilla (2)
CA4273H Karen(2)
CA I397L Judy Ann (4)
CA3738P Laura (2)
CA3592S Tommie (1)
CAI282V Fran (1)
CA 4346Y Julie (2)
CO3869H Angie (5)
FL2448B Carol Ellen (1)
FL2520B Joan (1)
FL2383L Catherine (3)
FL2565 P Joan (1)
FL3433T Donna (1)
FL4859W Donna
HI4503J Elise (1)
IL3416M Candace (3)
IN3637K Teddy (1)
KS4719B Robyn
MD4883A Terri
ME2461S Betsy (1)
MI4358H Florence
MI 3343P Peggy (1)
MI2948T Marcia Ann (1)
MN1875Z Lynda(0)
MN3264G Sofronia Anne (7)
MO1823M Diana
NC3734C Sherri (2)
NC3743H Elizabeth Ann (3)
NM4717S Terri
NV4222B Robyn (2)
NY4783-S Jennifer
NY3717P Tammie (3)
OH2751M Gloria Sue (3)
PA2164CSue (3)
PA4046J Rita (2)
SD4384W Brennda (3)
TN I230H Rita (2)
TX1431W Brandi Ann
TXI669M Vicki (4)
UT4324 Jenni(3)
VT4336S Stephanie
VAI304M Andria (3)
WA2835Q Kristal (5)
WA3308S Allison (6)
WII2729L Kathy (2)
WI4I48W Frances Ann (2)

WANTED: BIG SISTERS

MARLENE, your Big Sister Program Coordinator, needs your help. Your new sisters need your help. All it takes is a little sisterly compassion, and the willingness to spend a few minutes writing letters. New sisters are joining all the time. Few things are more rewarding than welcoming them aboard and supporting them in their first year. Won't you write Marlene today, and see for yourself?

MARLENE, PO BOX 4067, VISALIA CA 93278

Outreach

A Really Rewarding Job, and It's Yours for the Asking

by Sharon J. Overby

Tri-Ess has several missions, and it is difficult if not impossible to rate them in order of importance. Tri-Ess is a support group. That means that it provides affirmation and support for its members. Tri-Ess is also an educational organization. That means that it provides information about crossdressing to its members and to the general public. Which is more important? Most people would say that support for members is paramount. Recently, I learned that providing education to the general public through outreach activities is a means of providing affirmation and support to participating members.

Some background information: The National Council for Family Relations (NCFR) is an organization of educators, publishers, counselors, lobbyists, and others whose primary goal is to promote The Family as a uniquely valuable entity. NCFR holds an annual convention which gives its members a forum to present papers and descriptions of research projects and studies in support of The Family. A vendor area provides organizations with products and/or services related to The Family an opportunity to meet and talk with both presenters and attendees. Tri-Ess, a family-oriented organization, has had a booth in the vendor area of the NCFR conference for the past several years.

A few weeks ago, I saw a posting to the Tri-Ess Forum (you ARE a member, aren't you?) asking for volunteers to man (person?) the Tri-Ess booth at the NCFR conference. The request came from Judy Daniels, who has organized and managed this particular outreach activity since its inception. "Hmm," I thought, "This sounds like it might be interesting. It's in Milwaukee, WI, about a five-hour drive from here. And it's a chance to be Sharon for a long weekend, out of town no less."

So I contacted Judy, and said, "Sure, I'll be there. What's this all about, anyway?" Judy referred me to the NCFR website, I checked it out, thought, "Hmm. Looks really interesting." Anyway, I went. And now, the REST of the story.

Since the whole point of this trip was supposed to be Outreach to the General Public about crossdressers and Who We Are, I decided that I would undertake the entire trip as Sharon. I had only done an out-of-town trip like this once before, two years ago at the Holiday En Femme in Chicago. This turned out to be the graduate school version of that expedition.

The trip down was both uneventful and also full of potentially high-stress situations. A five hour drive involves stops for gas, food, and physiological activities best not described in a family oriented publication. Gas stops were old hat. No big deal. Lunch at a Country Kitchen in Tomah, WI, was a little nervous making, but turned out to be a total non-event. "Yes, ma'am, table for one? Smoking or non? Follow me please." Etc., etc. I won't bore you with details.

Check in at the hotel in Milwaukee was actually an event. The staff bent over backwards to get the pronouns right, and the desk clerk made a point of finding a bellhop, and asking him to assist Sharon with her bags. Can you spell Acceptance?

OK. Checked into the hotel, got set up in my room. Now it's time to run out to the airport and pick up Judy. Another non-event. Nobody paid a bit of attention to me. (I include these observations NOT because they surprise me. I've been out and about way too much to be surprised by anything anymore. I include them specifically as an answer to all crossdressers who say, "I/You can't do that! People won't LET you!" Well, sorry, but you're wrong, wrong, wrong! Think I'll do a separate article on that subject!)

Back to the hotel. It wasn't until Judy got settled in and it was time to start mingling with the civilians that I found out that Judy Daniels has a Black Belt in Outreach. We hadn't checked in at the registration desk yet (which meant that we Didn't Have No Steenking Badges!) so we were just a couple of crossdressers wandering

around in an upscale hotel. We took the elevator from our fourteenth floor room to the lobby. A middle-aged couple joined us on the twelfth floor. The woman looked at us, sniffed, and pointedly ignored us. Her husband flicked an eyeball at us, and looked away.

Judy immediately boomed out, "Hi! How are you?"

"Oh, fine."

"Oh, I see you two are vendors for the NCFR conference! So are we!"

Shock. Disbelief. Sudden realization that the two perverts sharing their elevator are there for the same reason they are. A subliminal 'WRENCH' as attitudes shift. "Oh, really?"

"Sure! We're representing Tri-Ess, an international organization of heterosexual crossdressers interested in family issues!"

The trip to the lobby took about fifteen seconds. When the doors opened, the woman gave us a big smile and said, "Hope you enjoy the weekend!" Her husband started out of the elevator, stopped in his tracks, held the door, and said, "After you, ladies!" Outreach. It's wonderful. Total conversion of a hostile couple in fifteen seconds. What an experience!

Later that evening, Judy did a thirty-second education of a bartender who was initially surprised at the concept of heterosexual crossdressing. A few minutes later, a group of hotel employees working the dinner buffet were told (by Judy) that Judy was a guy, was a crossdresser, was in fact quite normal, and were left with amazed expressions and a handful of Tri-Ess literature.

Saturday, we set up the booth, and I went back to the airport to pick up Dana, whom Judy described as being "Outgoing." Compared to Judy? Yes, she was.

We spent the rest of the day passing out literature and talking to anyone who would listen. "Here," said Judy, "Do you have your literature packet yet? I'd like you to have this, and it's yours to keep!" How can anyone turn that down? Especially when they hear it from a well-dressed lady with a big smile? So his voice says he's a guy? So what? Another fifteen minute (more or less) talk, another group aware of who we are. And most of these people are educators. When they leave, they go back to colleges and universities and tell their students that crossdressers are real people, just like everyone else. Will they really do this? Well, more than one professor brought his/her students along to the conference, and taught them just that right in front of us.

Long day. Dinnertime.We walk a couple of blocks to another hotel, with a restaurant specializing in fine dining experiences. We wait in the bar for the obligatory opportunity to order an extra round of drinks before dinner, and Judy and Dana go to work on the staff. More thirty-second educations/conversions. We get our table, eight of us in the middle of the dining room. The staff is exceptionally friendly. No one in the restaurant pays any attention. Towards the end of the evening, Judy asks our waiter if he would take a picture of us at our table. "Oh, and of course, will you get ALL THE REST OF THE WAITSTAFF to be in the picture with us?"

"Sure, no problem, we'd love to."

Suddenly, we're the center of attention. All eyes are on us. And here I am, the professional photographer who didn't bring her camera, seeing the best picture of all. A restaurant full of people watching this production, with approving smiles. Picture taken, camera returned, coffee orders taken, and everyone goes back to their business.

Sunday was a repeat of Saturday at the booth. We handed out four hundred (400!!) Femme Mirrors in about fourteen hours of high-traffic activity, even though we were back in the corner. (Well, we didn't stay there. Dana probably violated some rules of engagement, circulating through the attendees, but nobody complained.)

Sunday night, we had a Q and A session in the hotel sports grill/bar. We had mentioned our intention to do this to the hotel staff the day before, and were pleasantly surprised to find that they were promoting us to everyone they saw. Can you spell O-U-T-R-E-A-C-H?

Monday was more of the same, another trip to the airport, and an uneventful drive back to Minneapolis.

What was accomplished? An incredible amount of outreach and education. True, some people pointedly ignored us. I've been pointedly ignored before. I've done a lot of cross-country motorcycle touring (as well dressed as you can be on a trip like that, riding BMW R-bikes, for those of you who care) and was accepted less well than I was throughout the NCFR weekend. And I wore skirts or dresses the entire time at NCFR.

Now to the point. Have you been to a Holiday En Femme? Maybe you were in Chicago a couple of years ago. A hundred or so of us crossdressing in a hotel with about six hundred guests. Sure, we were a minority, but we had a place to hide if we wanted to. And we were there for ourselves. Outreach was incidental to the Holiday. At the NCFR conference, the hotel had about eight hundred guests, and only half a dozen crossdressers. Announcing themselves, no less. And being accepted, while people were being educated. Nowhere to hide. Nowhere to run. And it was our job to NOT hide, to NOT run, but instead to walk up to perfect strangers and tell them that we were crossdressers, and were proud of it! And they said, "Fine."

Incredible. We're looking for volunteers for next year's NCFR conference, just outside of Los Angeles. Let's see, if six of us could hand out four hundred Femme Mirrors (at least one person came back to ask for another copy because someone had actually stolen their copy) and ten people read each one, that's four thousand more people that know the Truth about crossdressers, think what we could do with twelve volunteers? Or twenty four?

Not to mention what a weekend like this would do for them!

Abby's Road

by Abby

(Ed. Note: Here's what it did for one such volunteer!)

December marks the six-month anniversary of Abby's existence. She came into being one evening back in early June through Rori's magic at Transformations. With each Tri-Ess meeting I'm getting to know more and more of you. I know some of you have been wondering who this Abby person is since she doesn't look anything like that picture they keep pasting up in the newsletter (but then, no one really looks like that). Sarah is going to fix all that at the December Christmas party, I hope.

Last month, Abby's Road accumulated some incredible mileage. Terri and I represented Tri-Ess at the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations in Milwaukee. We were there with Tri-Ess sisters from Oklahoma, North Carolina and Minnesota. It was an absolutely mind boggling experience. Out of the hundreds of people attending the conference over four days, there were only four cross-dressers, and we were WELCOMED, ACCEPTED AND APPRECIATED for who we were and what we were doing. We didn't have to worry about being read. We were advertising!!

Up until then, Abby had only been two places, Tri-Ess meetings and Transformations, both safe, protective and supportive. After joining Chi Chapter in August, I received an E-mail from our President asking for volunteers to go to Milwaukee and help at the Tri-Ess booth for this conference. It just so happened that we were going to be in Milwaukee that weekend anyway for the annual model railroad show, so we wrote back indicating we would be available to help a little. Big Mistake.. "Helping a little" soon became major participation. Judy from Texas and Dana from North Carolina (the same ones that are in all those Peggy Rudd books) were soon calling and e-mailing with all sorts of instructions and information.

The conference was going to be in the main ballroom of the Hyatt Regency, and we were expected to be en femme the whole time, starting with the staff meeting Friday evening in the lobby. Right! I'm going to walk into the lobby of the Hyatt Regency on Friday night and sit there where everyone can look at me! This is not like going to Transformations. By the time Friday evening arrived, the anticipation and excitement overcame the fear, although I did chicken out a little bit and wore slacks instead of a skirt. Judy was sitting in the open air coffee shop right in the middle of the lobby, and she had no trouble picking us out. Wonder what gave us away?

At the meeting we met Sharon from Minneapolis. Dana would be flying in Saturday morning. Here we learned what was going to be expected of us. Tri-Ess sponsored an information and resource booth at the conference and our job was to build the booth, keep it stocked with Tri-Ess materials, hand out the materials and talk to as many people as we could about cross-dressing and cross-dressers. The conference was being attended by social workers, educators, government agencies, medical professionals, ministers and clergy, counselors, authors and scholars. It was a great opportunity to positively expose a large number of people to the experience of interacting with a cross-dresser and to show them that we are real people and that each of us is a part of a family experience. Terri, especially got a lot of attention as the wife of a cross-dresser. She did great!

There were a couple of things that really stood out about the weekend. First, the idea that I could spend the whole weekend walking all over the Hyatt Regency in a skirt and heels, and be welcomed and accepted, was extraordinary. When Dana finally arrived on Saturday afternoon, I had to take her over to the registration desk to get her conference credentials. When we got there, the desk was closed down. I went behind the desk and found the credentials boxes, went through them and found Dana's materials. Before I could get away, I had other people coming up to check in, and I ended up waiting on all of them too. If any of them read me, it didn't matter. They were very happy to be taken care of by Abby.

The second big memory of the weekend was on Saturday evening. We all walked down to the Steakhouse at the Hilton to have dinner together. Our group was four crossdressers, one wife, and a professor and his wife. We passed out our Tri-Ess literature to the hostess, the bartender and the waiters, so they all knew who and what we were. We were welcomed and catered to just like any other customers. Later that night we attended the President's Reception back at the Hyatt. Good thing we each decided to bring an evening dress. We went through the reception line to shake hands with the conference President and his family, including his daughters. We then went through the dessert lines with all of the other attendees, carrying on conversations with everyone wherever we went. Everyone treated us with respect and dignity. One lady asked me where she could find size 14 shoes for her daughter.

The last big memory of the weekend came Sunday evening, when we gathered in the sports bar of the Hyatt. Although Sharon came down in leggings and a Packers sweatshirt (there are pictures to prove this) I had one more dress with me that I hadn't worn yet, so it was a dress and heels in the sports bar. Talk about a tough crowd! Actually, they were all very nice to us, and we were much more interesting than the football game on the TV.

For Abby, the conference was a huge confidence boost. Next year, the conference is in Irvine, CA. All travel, lodging and meal expenses are deductible because you are working as a volunteer for Tri-Ess, a 501©(3) not-for-profit corporation. Whether you're new in Tri-Ess like us, or a seasoned veteran like Judy and Dana (Sorry about that, girls!) it's a great experience that I highly recommend. Hey, Terri! Want to go to California next fall?

(Reprinted from "The Chi Tribune," newsletter of Chi Chapter.)

Letter to a Little Sister

by Allison Marsh WA-3308-S

Dear Mellonie,

You said you're north of Marysville. Did you know there is a small group of transgendered people who meet in Bellingham? Here is the address, phone number, and name of their leader: (——). She has the directions to the meeting in her answering service response, so have a pencil handy if you call.

I think I mentioned the meetings at Ingersoll Gender Center, 1812 East Madison, Seattle. There are general gab sessions for transgenders at 7:30 each Thursday night, a structured discussion group on every Friday night from 8:00 to 10:00; and a crossdressing group on Saturday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 or 10:00. I used to facilitate a couple of the Friday Night meetings each month, but when we started the Saturday night crossdresser meetings, I switched, because it's lots easier for me to make it to Seattle on Saturday than on Friday, and besides, I'm a crossdresser myself.

You told me quite a lot about your background and how you feel about being transgendered. I've sort of been the route, though to neither extreme. I write an article that gets published in the "Femme Mirror" once in a while. I write a monthly column of excerpts from other clubs around the country for the "Emerald City News." And I am one of the senior support group facilitators at Ingersoll. I've been to several national conferences and regularly attended Esprit, which our own Emerald City helps sponsor for four days each year in Port Angeles. Phoebe and I have taken one of Peggy Rudd's Dignity Cruises to Alaska (did that last year) with a crossdressing group (mostly Tri-Ess members), during which all of us crossdressers were en femme for the whole week. It was a blast.

Like everyone who is a crossdresser, I had my share of fantasies as a young person, and at least one crossdressing experience before I started to school, which stuck in my mind like an anchor. I later came to realize that other boys have crossdressing experiences like mine, or more often, but they don't seem to make such an impression. For most of them the experience is like a seed blowing over a field of dry, hard dirt. It lights on the ground, and blows on. But for us who are transgendered, the seed falls on tilled, fertilized, dampened soil, and it takes root. It stands as a very meaningful beacon in our lives. That's not because of what we did; it's because of what happened to us in our mothers' wombs, during the hormonal changes in our brain development. So lots of us move on, cherishing the experience, buidling fantasies from there, and usually repressing the dickens out of our feelings.

I didn't start acting on my desire to appear feminine until the midpoint of my 25-year marriage. My wife was at first supportive, then suddenly envious, and took the "never at home" stance. I managed to try about everything there is to do away from home that can involve crossdressing, other than having an affair. None of it made me feel good about myself. Finally, I started attending Friday Night sessions (now at Ingersoll) once in a while. The other people there were crazy. They wanted to be called by girls' names. Some women wanted to be called by boys' names. You couldn't tell whether they were really boys or girls in some cases. They were kind of cliqueish. Some were street people. A couple were boozed up. Nobody was friendly. Everyone was suspicious. I just KNEW I wasn't one of them. But I was. I had a terrible time coming to grips with the fact.

Two things then happened. I took a more serious look at that group, and decided I needed to find out abut the people, the motivations for their being there, and how my situation related to theirs. And the group was taken over as an Ingersoll group, structured, improved, and much more palatable to a person used to being a part of his community.

I saw a psychiatrist about my deteriorating marriage, after three years of marriage counseling didn't help. He guided me through the morass of emotions that come with breaking the marriage vows, disappointing your friends, family, children, etc. It turned out to be not as serious a problem for all the other people in my life as it was for me. People who had never been my friends came up and told me about what happened in THEIR divorces. And some of them became my friends.

But then there was the whole dating thing—starting a social life all over as a single person, and as a crossdresser. It was a long, interesting experience. After years of trying to meet someone I'd enjoy partnering with, felt I was defeating my own purposes with my "screening" process. I was seeing myself simply as a crossdresser in search of a companion or wife. Then I met a counselor who said, "I don't see you as a crossdresser. I see you as a President of the PTA, as a Lions Club officer, as an amateur photographer, as a successful professional of many years at your job. I see you as a parent and a responsible person. And I am treating you not for transvestism, but for social isolation. That was a great help, and it gave me some strength to start making some disclosures of my gender to a few people to whom I had not previously mentioned it. (No, not to broadcast it to people who had no reason to know.)

Anyway, 14 years after the marriage broke up, Phoebe and I decided growing old alone was like swimming alone; just too dangerous. So for that, and a lot of more fun reasons, we joined forces in my house

Tau Gamma's Year in Review

by Melissa and Kath Hadley

Tau Gamma, located in Burlington, NC, has completed its first year. Starting off with 11 people meeting at Melissa and Kath Hadley's home, we all brainstormed and put together ideas for what we wanted in a chapter and pounded out the by-laws together to form what Tau Gamma is today.

We wanted to have a chapter that was family oriented. One of the ways we accomplished this was by inserting certain rules in our by-laws. All chapter members must join Tri-Ess and we held our chapter to heterosexual cross dressers, MtF and FtM only; no transsexuals are permitted to join the chapter. Not that we have anything against the transsexual community, but there are several other support groups they can go to, and we didn't want to have to deal with those kinds of issues when dealing with our wives and children in our chapter. These two items require a 100% approval of the total membership to be removed. The rest of the by laws require a 67% approval for a change.

We also added some en homme events besides our regular monthly chapter meeting activities. Last Valentine's Day we had an en homme dance, so that our Wives and Significant Others could have a day and an evening (Saturday) of no cross dressing and fun with their spouses and boy friends. We also had an en homme Family Camp Out Weekend that was a real hoot in May. These two events were very successful for us. They were enjoyed so much so that they will be done annually. These type of en homme events have proven to be helpful in 'bringing out' the wives/SO's who have a difficult time dealing with the issue of their partner's cross dressing. It is a safety zone they can attend to see and experience that we are all really just regular people.

Upon seeing how helpful these two events were, we instituted a monthly en homme program called Expressions of Love. It lasts 1 to 2 hours on Saturday mornings after breakfast. We all meet and discuss differences, relationships, fears, joys, and the challenges we face as couples and individuals coming to grips with loving a cross dresser and the cross dresser accepting himself. The Expressions of Love program has proven to be a real success for us.

Tau Gamma meets for weekend meetings on the second weekend of each month. Our meeting starts on Friday afternoon and finishes up on Sunday morning. We have already tripled our membership from the original 11, but we are not worried about the growth as much as we are the quality of the chapter, and what we offer as a total package to the whole family as well as the cross dresser. The growth will follow if we keep our sights on the goals ahead and continue to have innovative programs that the members enjoy.

As our year started to wind down in October, we had our first major event, the Mad Hatter's Costume Ball, which is now also an annual event. There were many imaginative costumes and the event was so successful that we are looking to make this a two day event starting on a Friday and ending on Sunday morning. We finished up our year with our Holiday Get Together and the Chapter Member of the Year Award presentation. This year's recipient was our chapter's Web Mistress, Robyn Paige, who was well deserving for her dedication to the chapter and all the hours she put in helping the chapter as well as helping others.

January 1999 is our chapter's first anniversary and the chapter's election month for Board members. We are all looking forward to another exciting year ahead.

Continued from page 53

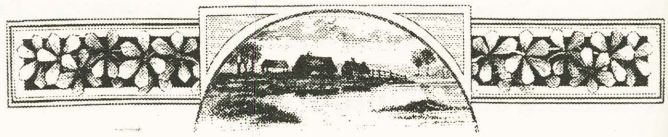
in Olympia. The first time I told Phoebe I am transgendered, we had spent a week end at Ainsworth Hot Springs. I parked overlooking Osooyos and told her pretty much the whole story. But by this time, I was no longer ashamed of who I was, and her response was teriffic. She said, "Good. Lets go home to your house and see what you have!" That was four years before we decided to live together.

I might add that when I told my college-age son and daughter, I felt pretty ashamed because I thought all the social stigma was justified and that I had made some very bad decisons in becoming who I was. My son took it well, and said he didn't feel that way, but he could understand how I might, and I was still the same father he loved. My daughter's reaction was very much at the other end of the scale. We are still not close, 20 years later.

Especially during my retirement, I have realized what an extraordinary gift I have in being transgendered. It's like having an extra dimension in my personality that most other people never get to experience. It's interesting, captivating, funny, adventuresome, and worth every bit of the discomfort I experienced before I accepted myself for who I am and began to look for the good sides. And it has become the source of many friendships which I would otherwise never have had the opportunity to develop. There are lots of good sides.

Please feel free to contact me any time you wish, especially if it seems I might be able to help. I gave you my phone number and address in my previous e-mail, so won't do it again here. But you are welcome to use them when you need to talk.

Your new friend,
Allison Marsh



Telling My Mother

By Diane Liegh TX 4261 H

For some time now I have been thinking about telling my family about my crossdressing. I live in Texas and the rest of my family lives in either California or Illinois. It's not that they are liable to find out or have a burning "need to know," it's just that I can't talk to them about a very important part of my life. My family members aren't very close and communicate very infrequently - I guess it's the result of growing up in a dysfunctional family. If they decide that they don't want to have anything further to do with me, I don't feel that I will have lost a lot.

I recently had occasion to be near Illinois and decided to visit both my sister and my mother. I had a nice visit with my sister but decided against telling her right then. Let's just say the situation "wasn't right."

I proceeded on to visit my mother. I visited with her, showed her some pictures of the earlier part of my current trip and then took her to do some of her "need to do" errands. We then went out to dinner. After dinner I took her back to her apartment, preparatory to my saying good-bye and leaving to continue my trip.

When we got to her apartment, I pulled out some photos which had been removed from the group which she had looked at earlier. As you read this, you can guess that the pictures which had been removed were of Diane. You are right. I handed the pictures to her and said, "Mom, I have some pictures that I would like you to look at."

She took the pictures and looked at the one on the top of the stack for a minute and said, "This is a man!"

My reply was, "Yes, it is. It is me!"

"I would never have guessed it was you," she said. She thumbed through the rest of the pictures. While she was doing so I told her that I was a crossdresser and had been since age 9 or 10. I also told her that I couldn't wear girl's things back then - what would she have thought? Surprise! She said, "I would just have thought you were playing dress up". I also told her that I wasn't gay, it wasn't her fault, and so on. I asked her if she had any questions and she said she was too shocked to think of anything. I asked if she would like some books and other information on the subject and she said she would. Perhaps the most revealing statement she made was, "I'm so sorry that you had to suffer for so long." She also said something to the effect that maybe Diane and she could have some fun!

So there it is! I told her and she apparently accepted my crossdressing and me - at least to some degree. Hopefully we can discuss her feelings and concerns after she recovers from the initial shock.

I'm glad I did it. Everyone must decide for themselves whether to tell or not. I see telling in much the same light as venturing out - it seems really scary before you do it but afterwards you wonder what the big deal was. Everyone has to decide for themselves which path to take. I hope that my experience may be of some benefit to those considering this subject.

By Elizabeth

I am not sure it it is my wife's acceptance level or my sister's early death that added to my anguish level as I debated telling Mom about my desire to crossdress. You see, my wife has not fully accepted Liz yet, and I was worried that the arrival of a new daughter might bring back Mom's sorrow over my sister passing away.

But with Mom's health failing, and her eventual move into our house, I decided to handle this revelation a bit better that when I shared Liz's attire with my wife.

I had tried to work up the courage to tell Mom on a few different visits, but finally one day after talking with friends from South Carolina and North Carolina, I went over, sat down, and promptly changed the subject. It was kind of like the first kiss back in high school, if you can relate. So I went over again about two weeks later and tried again.

This time, after being there for about an hour, it finally came out. Of course, she was a bit stunned. She asked if I was gay, how long I had been dressing, and who else knew. She also declined my invitation to see Liz, but overall she seemed OK with it. Mom is 75 years old now, and just about every conversation tends to wander about, never staying on one topic. Sort of like my writing, just so you know who I take after. Then the next

weekend our local newspaper ran an article related to Mr. Bridges' business. Mom saw that, which led to another brief discussion.

But it was not till we made plans to liquidate some of her household items, that the opportunity finally came for Liz to pay Mom a visit. The night before her first garage sale, I spent the night at her house to price and arrange the items to sell. An hour or so into the night, Mom, who has a bad heart, decided to rest for a spell while I worked on. I had already given thought to asking Mom if I could come out, and now the chance was beginning to fade.

After a few minutes, though, she began to feel better, and I decided to take a shower in order to be ready for the onslaught the next morning. On a whim, and since I was prepared (three outfits, etc., in the car), I asked her if I might be able to dress as Liz the rest of the night. Again, Mom seemed reluctant to meet Liz, but she said OK. Then I started worrying about heart attacks, etc. But, I went ahead with my plan, took the shower and put on my makeup. It took a good hour, and Mom later admitted to wondering if she should come back to check on me.

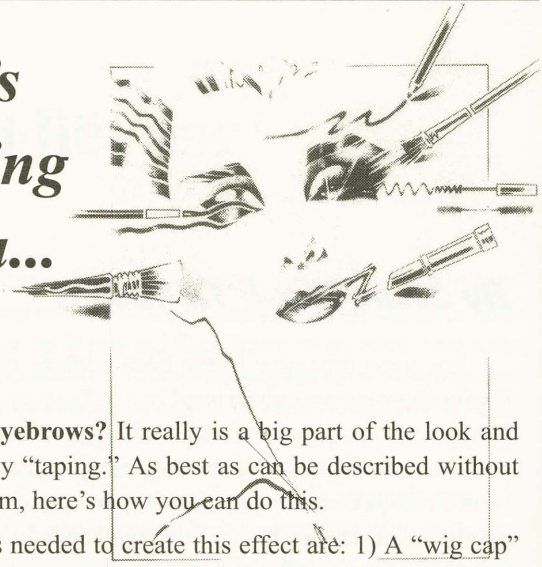
When I finally came out, giving a big "Ta Da!" in the process, the smile on her face was all I have ever needed. She came over, had me do a couple of 360's and gave me a big hug. She was amazed and did not believe it was me. Yes, I was on the ceiling by then! We sat there for a good hour this time, with her really asking question after question. Then, with time running out, Liz and Mom got back to the task of pricing items for the garage sale, this time, of course, with me as Liz. I was able to change into my other outfits before we finished later that night and retired for bed.

Some of Mom's comments ranged from, "I was always wondering why you were so patient shopping with me in the women's department," to, "I want to take you out shopping and pick out some outfits for you." I guess we are our own worst enemies. However, not all stories end up positive.

I guess I should describe myself as "still coming out." That is, I venture out to an occasional meeting or dinner with other girlfriends. If I were "truly out," my neighbors, friends and coworkers would all know about Liz.

[Reprinted from "The Southern Belle," newsletter of Sigma Epsilon Chapter.]

Here's Looking at You...



Arched eyebrows? It really is a big part of the look and can be done by "taping." As best as can be described without using a diagram, here's how you can do this.

The items needed to create this effect are: 1) A "wig cap" which you can purchase at most wig stores and 2) Tape. Which kind? We use what is called Plastic Tape /Transpore by 3M.

First. Be sure that your forehead is clean. Use a toner or astringent to assure that the skin is clean and moisture free. You will not want any type of lotion or foundation on this area prior to applying the tape. In other words, the tape won't hold onto your skin if it isn't dry!

Put on the wig cap, making sure all your hair is tucked inside, and do leave a small amount of the cap's rim on the forehead, a few inches above the eyebrows.

Second. Rip off two pieces of tape about 8" in length. The tape will run from above your eye and over the top of your head, onto the wig cap. I mention this to give you a visual at this point.

Now, attach the tape above the area of the brow where you want to create the highest point in the arch. In effect, you will have an end of the tape attached to your forehead and in a vertical position, pointing to the ceiling when you hold it up. Secure the tape onto your forehead by pressing on it. This is about a 2" portion of the tape.

Now pull the loose end of the tape upwards and across the top of your head. Angle slightly toward the other side of the head (just off center). The final effect when have done both sides is an "X" tape line across the top of your head.

Once you have created a good arch by pulling upwards on the tape, you can tug pretty hard, because the arch will relax when the tape stretches. You can secure the rest of the tape in place, over the wig cap.

Third. Do the same thing with the other eyebrow, remembering to create a little greater arch in the other brow, as it will relax a bit in a minute or so, as the tape stretches slightly.

(Reprinted from the "No Name Newsletter" of Alpha Tau Chapter.)

Glamour Shots

by Rachel Rene Boyd

At one of our Chi Epsilon Sigma meetings I heard someone remark that crossdressers love to have their picture taken. That caused me to reflect on my experience with crossdressing and taking pictures. I have often taken the camera, set the self-timer, and snapped some pictures of myself. Of course, I was always disappointed when the reality of the picture did not match my image of myself as a woman. I decided that what I wanted to do was have some pictures made by a professional photographer who could make me look as good as I feel.

First I had to select a photographer. The yellow pages gave me a long list to work from, but not much else to discriminate between photographers. One characteristic I needed was a photographer some distance from my home, to minimize the chance of encountering someone who knew me. So I began making some calls, explaining what I wanted. The reaction was mixed. Some photographers did not return my calls. I visited one who was interested, but his studio was old and not too imaginative. Move on. There was another yellow page advertisement that intrigued me. This photographer was a female who specializes in boudoir pictures. She was one who hadn't returned my calls, but I decided to visit her studio anyway. I thought if I visited with her I might have a better chance of getting her to make the pictures I wanted.

We had a very nice visit. I explained that I wanted some very classic pictures of myself en femme. I showed her some of my snapshots so she would understand who would be parading into her studio. She had never encountered a crossdresser before and had a lot of questions. I was only too happy to share my experiences. As I had hoped, she agreed to perform the assignment. She even suggested that she could provide a cosmetologist to do my makeup and hair for a glamorous presentation to the camera. What a wonderful idea! A makeover and photo session too! This lady knew how to appeal to a crossdresser. We set an appointment and she suggested that I bring three or four outfits, including something casual and something very dressy.

I was giddy with anticipation for the entire week before the session. When the day finally came I dressed at home, applied some makeup, and drove to the studio. When I walked in, the photographer was talking with another customer, whom she introduced. Then her assistant took me to the studio where we sat and talked about crossdressing and what I was expecting in the photos. When the cosmetologist arrived, we got to work. She said she had never done makeup on a man as a woman. But she did a wonderful job, spending just about an hour on it. First she cleaned off my home-applied makeup. Then the process began. I can't describe all of the steps she took, but I do recall that this was the first time I ever had my eyelashes curled! She also used liquid eyeliner both above and below the eyes. Liquid eyeliner is not used very much with today's understated natural look in makeup style. But it highlights the eyes very well under the bright lights of the camera. Another touch that impressed me was that she custom mixed the lip color to match the nail polish I was wearing. I was never so pampered!

Then came the actual photo shoot. The photographer showed me how to sit, how to stand, how to hold my hands, and how to turn my head to get the maximum feminine appearance. She did several poses with a variety of backgrounds. We spent over an hour doing a variety of poses: standing, sitting, and reclining. When it was over we had about 35 shots, both black & white and color, in the camera. She complemented me many times on my eyes, which are naturally blue, but the eye makeup really made them stand out. As she was working with me, addressing me in my femme name, it seemed to me that she was relating to me as a woman. She even made one little Freudian slip that indicated she forgot for a moment that I was a man. Of course that thrilled me!

About a week later the proofs were ready for examination. Returning to the studio, this time in drab, I looked through the shots and selected the best ones. It was absolutely astounding

how good they looked. They were indeed closer to my self-image than I have ever seen before! In fact they were so good that I found myself spending a lot more money than I had ever expected. But I will probably do this only once, so I wanted it to be the best. Through the entire process the photographer and her assistant both treated me with the utmost respect and dignity. (The cynic would say it was the Visa Platinum.) We had another discussion about the meaning of crossdressing. She confided that she had some doubts about whether she wanted to do the shoot when I first came to her studio. But she said that I seemed so sincere and considerate that she is now glad that she did the session. Then another special moment occurred for me. The assistant, who herself is about six feet tall, had brought me a shoe catalog from Massey's, the store that carries larger sizes. Wearing a size 12, she too has difficulty finding shoes, so she thought I could use the catalog. Most of all, I appreciated her kindness and consideration.

Finally, it came time to pick up the finished photos. Another adventure at the photographer's studio. I was welcomed warmly as any customer should be, but by this time the photographer and her assistant were treating me more like a friend than just a customer. We chatted some more about crossdressing, and why I had wanted to have pictures made en femme. The photographer had so many questions, which I was pleased to answer. Then we went through all of the pictures, arranged them in a logical pattern, and place them in an album. As we were finishing, another assistant, who had never seen me before, en femme or en homme, came in an sat down with us. With a twinkle in her eye, the photographer handed the album of my pictures to the new assistant and said, "He's getting some pictures of his wife. You know how husbands and wives often come to look alike. Don't you think they look a lot alike?" The new assistant looked at my en femme pictures and at me sitting there en homme trying not to betray myself, and said, "Yes, I see the similarity. You have a very beautiful wife." The new assistant either didn't know it was me, or she is one of the greatest actresses I have ever met!

So, yes, I can attest that at least this crossdresser LOVES to have her picture taken!

Rachel can be reached at 11654 Plaza America Drive, #328, Reston, VA 22090 or rachel_boyd@hotmail.com.

Silent Dreams

Let my life a mirror be,
Where all the world will see,
My gentle loving ways,
Reflects the girl in me.

My life is an open book
For other girls to read,
The words of comfort
In their need.

Make my life a touch of truth,
Where tender hearts can feel,
And scars will anneal.

Make my life a babbling brook
Where laughter flows free,
Where all the world can see
The image of the girl in me.

(Reprinted from the "Pink Slip," newsletter of Tri-Chi Chapter.

Hey Good Looking!

Body Sugaring

by Deb

This is what I do for body sugaring. Keep in mind that this is based on my personal experience only. If you have any questions, just ask.

I use strips of cotton broadcloth material for removing the hair. I find it works better than the heavier muslin type cloth. I buy the cheapest stuff I can find, usually the stuff in the bargain center; just make sure the cloth isn't too loosely woven. I cut it into strips with pinking shears. To wash, I just toss them in the washer and dryer. (Hand wash? Not likely!) When I use them again, I just flatten them with my hands and cut any loose strings off. When they get too worn, I'll just make more. A meter or two should make lots! - and I find that I go through a LOT of strips.

It is important that your skin be clean and dry before you sugar. You must also exfoliate your skin with a loofah or whatever you like. The trick to the sugaring paste is to get it so that it doesn't have to get extremely hot to become liquid. I think that the hotter it is allowed to get as it boils, the harder it sets when it cools and the hotter it has to be to turn liquid again. It also seems to make a difference how fast or hard it boils. I had one batch that I put on high and left for a while. It got to the same temperature, but it was harder when it cooled. I have found it best to make several small batches instead of one large one. The more times you heat up the paste, the thicker it gets. It alsovthickens as it ages, so I don't usually make my batches too far ahead of time.

My Recipe

1-7/8 cups of white sugar
¼ cup water
¼ cup lemon juice

Use a fairly large, heavy pan because the sugar will foam up as it boils. Mix the ingredients in the pan and put on medium heat. Boil gently until a candy thermometer reads 120 degrees C. The mixture will turn an amber color as it cooks. Take it off the heat, let it cool a bit and pour into a container. A wide shallow one works best - if you have a tall container the paste tends to get all over the stick.

When the paste is cooled in the jar, it should be quite thick, but it shouldn't be solid. If it flows like honey, it's too thin . If it doesn't flow at all, it's too thick and will probably be too hot to use by the time it's heated to the point where it can be spread. The right consistency is very thick, but 'moldable'. If it flows very slowly and sluggishly when you tilt the jar (like molasses), or if you can just poke your finger in it, and the dent stays in the paste after your finger is gone, then it's about right. Heated, it should be slightly thinner than liquid honey.

The recipe can be adjusted with a little experimentation if you like. If the paste is too thin, reduce the liquid or use more sugar; too thick, add more liquid or reduce the sugar. You can also experiment with how long you boil the mixture. I reduced the amount of sugar from 2 cups originally because the paste was too thick. I made about 5 batches before I got one that was pretty good. My first batch was boiled for ***far*** too long. It turned a dark amber and it cooled rock hard. I threw it out jar and all! I made one batch with only 1 ¾ cups of sugar and it was too thin.

To use the paste, either microwave it (careful-it heats up fast) or boil some water and let the jar sit in the hot water for about 5 min. Be sure to test the temperature ***very*** carefully before you put a lot on your skin. I usually test a bit on the palm of my hand where the skin is a little thicker and tougher. I usually keep a wet, cold washcloth handy just in case it's a little hot when it goes on. I use a craft stick- like a tongue depressor- or a popsicle stick to spread the paste. I find that the paste works best when it is very warm - it spreads thinner that way. Take a bit of paste on the stick and spread it on, as thin as you can, in the direction of the hair growth. Put a strip on the paste and press it on firmly. Pull the strip off against the direction of the hair growth. Be sure to hold your skin taut, and pull the strip directly back, not up. You can use the same strip a couple of times. To clean up, all you need is soap and water.

If you've never sugared or waxed your legs before, here's what to expect. I find that the 'established' or thicker hair needs to be a little longer (about ½ inch) than finer hair. The first time is the worst, although I find it's a lot like ripping off a bandaid. It gets easier the more times you do it, because the hair grows back finer. If you do leave it for a while, the hair will get established again, and it will be like starting over, although it's not quite as bad. If the hair is too long, like over an inch or so, it will be harder to get an even layer of paste and not pull the hair every which way. For some reason, I find that the sugaring is less painful than waxing. You will probably have some redness and bumps after sugaring, especially if your hair is established. This will fade within a few hours. If your hair is very fine, you probably won't get much redness. Some sugaring that you buy comes with a bottle of chamomile lotion to use after sugaring, so you could try a similar product if you want. I've heard it also helps to put your hand over the area just after you pull the strip off and apply some pressure for a moment.

I've only purchased 1 jar of sugaring. This recipe is not exactly the same, and it may not be as consistent, but it's SOOOO much cheaper! It can be a little messy, but cleanup is so easy. It really helps if you have a buddy to do the sugaring with - makes it easier to get those awkward spots like the backs of your legs!

(Deb from "ToonTown" <shadowkuma@hotmail.com>. Reprinted from the Fiesta Chapter newsletter.)

The Real Truth About Crossdressing

by Ellen Sherman

Every Fall, several hundred traditional husbands, fathers and businessmen come together in Provincetown for Fantasia Fair, with parties, seminars and workshops exploring the thorny issue of how to buy the right wig and hide a 5 o'clock shadow with the foundation and blush-on.

Heterosexual married men from suburbia with families who cross-dress? What's going on? Apparently a much more common practice than most people would imagine. It's estimated that at least 1% of the male population crossdresses. And even as we approach the 21st Century, the idea of a heterosexual man in heels is still more than a little threatening, and confusing even for the crossdressers themselves.

As JoAnn Roberts, founder of Renaissance, a Delaware Valley crossdressing support group of over 400, said: "I knew growing up that I wasn't gay and I was heterosexual. I thought I might be crazy, but I knew I wasn't gay."

Crossdressing is a subject that's been universally misunderstood. While producing the first documentary on heterosexual crossdressing called "All Dressed Up And No Place To Go," I found a host of misconceptions rampant in most people's thinking. The following are the Top Eleven Misconceptions that abound:

1) Crossdressers Are Gay

More than likely not. As Dr. William Stayton, Head of the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Sexuality and himself a therapist for crossdressers, reported: "People associate crossdressing with effeminacy and being gay, and the fact is most of them are not gay. They are very definitely heterosexual. In fact, one of the most difficult areas for crossdressers is how to deal with the women with whom they want to be involved."

2) Crossdressers Don't Like Women

The truth is that rather than shying away from women, most crossdressers are as married or looking for a relationship as any cross section of men in America. "There is even some advantage to being a heterosexual crossdresser," says Dr. Stayton. "When dressed, they often become more sensitive and understanding to the women in their lives. Their wives tend to find them delightful, and often it can become a real enhancement to marital relations." However, that "enhancement" can only come if the woman feels comfortable with her husband's occasional dressing. Many don't.

As Florida lawyer Jeff/Jean reports, "What would happen was that as soon as women found out about "Jean" the relationship would end, so why did I have to keep banging myself in the head? I was married to a woman that didn't approve and it was painful. Now I tell the women and let them even see "Jean." If we're going to be involved then they'll have to accept all of me just like I have to accept all of them."

3) Women Who Love Crossdressers Must Be Lesbians

What's it like to love a man who's wearing a dress? Pam, the wife of a Bank V.P crossdresser, recounts: "I did feel funny at first. I love my husband as a man but when I saw him in a dress as "Barbara," I thought, 'How can I love him?' The answer was I didn't have to love him the same way. With "Barbara," we're friends like I would be with any girlfriend. When he's dressed as a man, I feel free to love him as a man."

4) Crossdressers Dress For Sexual Gratification

Most crossdressers reveal that relaxation and relieving stress were the feelings they most associated with their crossdressing. However, many revealed that while teenagers there was a high degree of sexual excitement related to crossdressing, mostly relieved through masturbation. As hormones calmed down and they reached adulthood, the sexual element declined and the feelings the crossdressing elicited were very different. "What you'll find," Dr. Stayton reported, "is that very early on they associate these clothes with relaxation and stress relieval. They often use it to feel calmer. There is an erotic element to the crossdressing. Many will crossdress or fantasize about being crossdressed to enhance sexual enjoyment, but it's not necessary."

5) Crossdressers Always Wear Women's Clothes

In fact, most may only dress once a month or once every six months. Many men never even reach the point of fully dressing, but feel the same relaxed feeling by just wearing women's undies under their suits. "You can't imagine how many politicians can't give a speech in Congress without wearing women's panties," Dr. Stayton commented, adding he has first hand knowledge since many are his patients.

6) Crossdressers Have Weird Sexual Habits

No more than most. However, crossdressers did report their sex lives were enhanced by crossdressing to some degree. "Dale" recounted that: "Although many crossdressers will deny it, there is a degree of extra arousal that comes with being crossdressed when making love, but many women are not comfortable with that and we men have to be sensitive to that and accept it."

7) Crossdressers Look Like RuPaul

In fact many crossdressers are most comfortable dressing their "femme" selves as they would dress their male selves. Therefore most conventions of crossdressers find a roomful of men in dressed-for-success women's suits, low heels, tasteful makeup and coifed hair... much more Margaret Thatcher than RuPaul.

8) Crossdressing Develops in Adulthood

"We really find that crossdressing starts very young," reports Dr. Stayton. "Many remember that as preschoolers they got a certain feeling with Mom's clothing. It's very rarely something that develops in adulthood.

9) Crossdressers Are Made, Not Born

The current conventional wisdom seems to be that crossdressing is a result of both Nature and Nurture. "I certainly think there's a genetic influence, just as for all of us there are things that happen that program us as to how we'll be sexual, whether we'll like redheads or thin women. We all have preferences, but the truth is there's no common thread and we really don't know why it happens," reports Dr.Stayton.

10) Crossdressers Are Schizophrenic

In reality crossdressers exhibit slight personality alterations in their "femme" role, but in general, their personalities only change to the extent that many people's do when assuming different roles in life, i.e., CEO, husband, father. One wife reports her husband likes to dance as his "femme" self where he wouldn't feel that free as a man. Other wives recount how their husbands will shop with them when otherwise they'd never have the patience.

11) Crossdressing Can Be Cured

"Truth is you can't change it," Dr. Stayton concludes. Most professionals now try to counsel the crossdresser to deal with his crossdressing rather than eradicate it. "When someone comes to me and feels it's sick behavior, then to me, helping them to be healthy is to help them accept it and to be able to appropriately accept their own crossdressing feelings."

For more information: "All Dressed Up And No Place To Go," the first feature documentary on heterosexual crossdressing. Now available in home video.
Contact: CAJUN FILMS,36 East 20th Street, NY, NY 10011
PHONE 212-353-0500/ FAX 212-533-0710

Poet's Corner

Enigma

by Elizabeth Jane McDonald

No one knows her like I do.
No one knows her at all.
She's always there,
Yet out of sight,
Just waiting for a call.

She's warm, she's nice,
The dearest friend
That anyone could be.
Yet, only I have ever seen her
Once she's been set free.

She moves with grace
Into my life
Whenever I should call.
She warms my world,
She fills my life,
She lifts me when I fall.

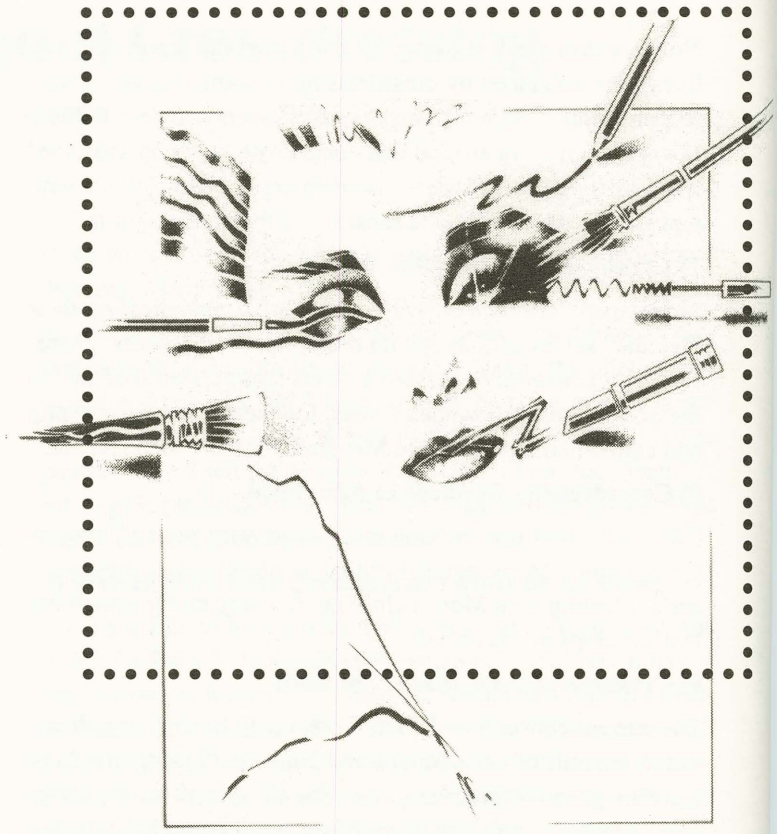
No one knows her like I do.
But, if she gets around,
She'll meet some friends,
She'll find a home,
She just wants to be found.

Elizabeth Jane McDonald's web site may be found at: http://homepages.wbs.net/~lizbethmcd/index.html

Hey, Good Looking...

Makeup Shelf Life: Danger In Your Closet

by Melanie Yarborough



Makeup doesn't last forever. Like many products, it can spoil, discolor, and lose its effectiveness over time. For many crossdressers who keep their makeup well hidden in hot stuffy places, or who only use it sporadically for support group meetings or shopping trips, there's a serious danger of putting contaminated products on your skin.

Makeup is an excellent incubation place for bacteria which need moisture to grow. Makeup can harbor yeast, fungi, and mold if not checked regularly. The following products have a specific shelf life and warning signs:

FOUNDATION: Lasts a year or less. This is the most often used and thus the most exposed. When you apply it, use a sponge; avoid using germ-carrying fingers. Look for changes in consistency, like thickness or a clay-like smell.

LIPSTICK: Lasts two to three years; oil-based lipsticks are a little less prone to contamination. Consider storing them in the refrigerator. A sign of spoilage is color change or rancid smell. If it burns on application, throw it out.

EYE & LIP PENCILS: Last three years, as the wax keeps germs out. Remember to sharpen them and keep the cap on.

MASCARA: Has the shortest shelf life of all; 3-6 months! Remember, you're applying this to the most sensitive part of your face, your eyes. Never touch anything but lashes with the brush.

LOOSE POWDER: Lasts for years, but can deteriorate if overexposed to light or heat. Keep it tightly closed. If it looks lumpy, it's hit moisture and should be discarded.

NAIL POLISH: Lasts two years, and is sometimes stamped with an expiration date. Over time, pigments separate, so shaking is necessary. If a good shaking doesn't mix it, get rid of it. Danger signs: thick, dried out, hard to apply smoothly.

POWDER COMPACTS-FACE/CHEEK/EYE COLOR: Lasts three years. Look for ghostly color, chalky texture, or cracking as signs of wear.

PERFUME: Lasts three years. Keep in original box, store in a cool dark place. Watch for a darkening color or a vinegary smell. Some people recommend a "cooling off time" of an hour or more after shaving and before applying makeup. Freshly shaven skin is very sensitive, and immediate makeup application can clog pores and lead to pimples. The bathroom is a bad storage place, as it gets exposed to heat and steam. And above all, do not share your makeup.

(This article originally appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter and is reprinted by permission of the author.)

Calendar of Tri-Ess Events

JULY 1999

14-18 *** S.P.I.C.E. VII *** , Minneapolis, MN. SPICE Registrar, Beta Gamma, Box 8591, Minneapolis MN 55408, E-Mail: melpeg@phoenix.net, spice@tri-ess-com, Phone: Mary Jane (Central) (918) 343-1953, Evelyn (Eastern) (215) 860-9271, Fax: Peggy (Central) (281) 347-8747

NOVEMBER 1999

10-14 *** HOLIDAY EN FEMME ***, Houston, TX. Brenda Thomas, 6904 E.Hwy 6 So. #334, Houston TX 77083, E-Mail: brenda@firstnethou.com

14-21: *** HOLIDAY AT SEA/ DIGNITY CRUISE #11***, Houston, TX-Calico-Cancun- Cozumel-Roatan, Honduras-Houston, CRUISEONE, INC., Anne McLaughlin, 1-800-699-6631, International 281-679-1399

CHAPTERS!!

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