



Monmouth Ocean TransGender

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September's meeting is our 8th anniversary! We'll be having a celebration. We're asking each person to bring a main or side dish for four (no desserts!). MOTG will provide cake, snacks, soda and coffee.

The featured presentation will be Terri outlining the history (or is herstory?) of MOTG. That will be followed that by having members share the story of there first time at MOTG.



Inside this issue:

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Stephanie Speaks:

Hello Girls,

Sorry to have missed you last month. However due to obligations beyond my control, I had no choice but to take the evening off and try to recuperate from too long a work schedule. All that being said, I will redouble my efforts to attend the monthly meetings. I hope all of you understand.

Please remember to join MOTG for our 8th anniversary this month. This will truly be a bittersweet event, as we recall the memory of Elaine, Danielle and all of the past members who have departed us. It is an especially important crossroads for us as we begin a new chapter in the history of MOTG. Gone are both of the founders; and now we all must redouble the effort to keep this support group thriving. This is so that those who bravely will follow in our footsteps, will have the same safe haven we all did, in order to take that first step out of the closet. I know that I will be trying hard for all of us.

Thank you, to Vikki, Kay, Diane, Mary and my S.O. Megan for a wonderful afternoon in August at my house. We met as a board to discuss the Business of the group. After some lunch and some tasty treats, we made a promise to do it again! This time we will invite more of you!

I have to say a big thank you to Diane and Mary for filling in for me. I know you are both tired, and can't wait for me to get back in the groove. Me too!

We have some new exciting ideas for us. I can't wait to tell you about them in person. But it will be after our Celebration this month. Be patient please.

Well girls, I have to start now so I can fit into my dress for September!

Until Next Month

Love,

Stephanie

Special points of interest:

- ♦ Fifth annual LGB & Transgender Festival Oct 11, 1998
- ♦ Paradise in the Poconos
- ♦ Lingerie CD
- ♦ Store of the Month

Vikki's Hot Flashes!

Hi folks, this is Vikki acting editor of our newsletter. Due to Elaine's passing, Gloria just doesn't feel up to doing the newsletter. Having lost loved ones; I know what that's like.

A heartfelt thanks goes out to Dr. Amy Altenhaus. She has made a generous donation to the Prayer Book Fund of Temple Shaari Emeth, in memory of Elaine Monroe. We've also received condolences from the Board of Directors of Renaissance National Office.

I've received the sad news of the passing of another (former) member. Kate Miller notified me that Jayce M. of Wickatunk northern New Jersey died recently. If anyone would like to tell us about her and her life, please send it to me at the MOTG PO box. It would be fitting if she were remembered in the trans community.

Do you remember Sgt. Della Fave's talk at MOTG earlier this year? Well, we've decided to follow up on something he mentioned. That is, making ID cards for crossdressing members. A former advertiser, Tom Hansen, (PO Box 53, Edison, NJ) has expressed an interest in doing the photography. The wording has to be worked out and a printer contacted. But stay tuned for details. The card would have two pictures of the member, one crossdressed, one not. Sgt. Della Fave suggested that it would be useful to present to a police officer if you're stopped while driving dressed. The idea is to demonstrate to the officer that you are not disguised and thus up to no good. No one in a disguise is going to have photo ID's of themselves and present it to officers. If you are interested in getting one of these cards let us know. We'd like to see how much interest there is.

Speaking of lingerie... (I suppose you were wondering when I was going to get to the fun stuff.) there is a new picture CD on the market. Sylvia Aster of Bandeau Boudoir Web site (<http://members.aol.com/aster314/>) has released a CD of lingerie images from Sears, Penny's, Montgomery Wards etc. catalogs.

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Relationship and Gender Issues

Back in the 70's, there was a precursor to the men's movement of today. It was kind of a reaction to the women's movement. The men's movement hadn't yet gotten into drumming, hugging trees or Iron John. Back then, I went to a Philadelphia men's conference that had

Monthly Meeting Volunteer Tasks

- Setup Help (2) - Sets up chairs or anything special needed for meeting, puts out food, coffee, drinks, etc.. Should arrive at 7:30pm.
- Door Cashier - Takes dues at the door. Should arrive no later than 7:45pm.
- 50/50 Person - Runs the 50/50
- Greeter - Meets people at the door and keeps eye out for newcomers. Should arrive no later than 7:45pm.
- Room Cleanup - Returns room to original state (puts away chairs, etc.) and cleans up food in meeting room. Must stay until the end on the meeting.
- Kitchen Cleanup - Empties and cleans coffee pots and straightens up kitchen area. Must stay until the end on the meeting.

Sign Up Sheet For Next Month

<u>Task</u>	<u>Name</u>
Setup Help	_____
Setup Help	_____
Door Cashier	_____
50/50 Person	_____
Greeter	_____
Room Cleanup	_____
Kitchen Cleanup	_____

NOTE - IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO FULFILL YOUR TASK PLEASE CALL MOTG AND LEAVE A MESSAGE AT (732) 219-9094 BEFORE THE MEETING OR INFORM ONE OF THE MOTG OFFICERS AT THE MEETING.



The Catalog Project CD-ROM

Sylvia Aster and Danielle North labored for nearly a year to produce what they believe is the most significant contribution to the historical study of foundation garments and lingerie yet available. Consisting of *over 2200 large scale (144 d.p.i. or greater resolution) scans* of individual commercial catalog pages, from 1946 to 1978, this CD-ROM also features an HTML document with a click-addressable keyword index. For the lover of the garments pictured, it is a godsend. For the undergarment historian, it is a unique resource, which will allow - among other things - the popularity of a given garment to be traced over the years included in the study. This is an archivist's dream! [Catalogs included: Alden's, Bellas Hess, Lane Bryant, J.C. Penney, Sears, Wards, and Spiegel.]

Due to the resolution of the scans, all the text of the advertising copy is easily readable. Where possible, the condition of the images has been significantly improved. Both PC and Mac owners can access the JPEG images on this disk, and the HTML click-index can be opened with your web browser. The images will open directly in your browser, by clicking on the index keyword links. For **\$30**, which includes postage and handling, you can help us keep our sites alive and growing!

The details (please read carefully!): Payment must be in the form of a **postal money order**, as our duplication provider wishes to remain anonymous. Please leave the 'pay to' space blank. *Do not send cash.* It is risky to send cash through the mail. If you can deal with these limitations, and wish to help us, send in your order today. (If you live outside the USA, write to us, and we'll arrange a payment method.) You will not be disappointed - this is a quality product!

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Please allow 4-3 weeks for delivery .

(One week delivery is very likely at present; however, we can't anticipate the volume of orders.)

If you have further questions, please write to aster314@aol.com

Thank you for considering us, and supporting our endeavors!

My Journey

by Diane Hutchinson

While preparing for the article I wrote last month on Tips on Passing in Public, it got me to thinking that the psychological process that many of us go through in reaching the point where we want and even need to publicly express our transgendered side was worthy of it's own article. Turning my thoughts in that direction I quickly realized that for me the drive to go out in public crossdressed, as with almost everything else about my transgendered nature, was a long slow journey filled with many bumps. What I have tried to record below is what I think the milestones were during this journey along with what my thoughts, feelings and what other people's reactions were to me at that time.

My First Awareness - When I first became aware of the fact that I liked "girl stuff" I was about age 3. At that time I saw nothing wrong with being associated with feminine things and freely played dress up at my baby-sitters house with the other girls. Most of the other children did not seem to mind though one or two of the boys would not play with me if I was dressed up in girl's clothes. I felt happy and free to be myself.

The First "Lesson" - At some point the baby-sitter had enough of my dressing up. I think it was because one of the new children, a boy, was really bothered by it. She asked me to stop wearing the girl's stuff and if I wanted to play dress up I should wear the boy's costumes. Well, let me tell you that was not something I wanted to hear! I remember being sad and confused about the situation. As you may guess I continued to dress and play with the girls, but I was more cautious about not getting caught by the baby-sitter. Ultimately though I was caught and my parent's were told. My father flipped out calling me names and punishing me for my "sissy" behavior. He did a really great job in humiliating me and bringing me to tears. His reaction taught me that wanting to be like a girl was something I should be very ashamed of and that public or private behavior of that sort was totally unacceptable. My gender expression and certainly my desire to appear in public while crossdressed was totally crushed.

Learning to Live with Shame - During most of my youth my father made sure he reinforced his view that a boy expressing himself in any way other than being totally masculine was utterly unacceptable to him and to everyone else. I still wanted to wear those clothes and play with the girls sometimes, but fear and shame kept me from acting on it. Instead I tried to totally hide my transgendered feelings and the need to express them. That was what I was supposed to do, right? To a great degree I was very "successful" at internalizing my feelings, but there were rare occasions when I would secretly act on those feelings. The thought of ever being seen as feminine in public though was now totally horrifying.

A Slight Opening, then a Total Denial - When I hit puberty I discovered, as all boys that age do, that my penis was not just for letting me go to the bathroom while standing up. Without getting too graphic let's just say that I was definitely not the Master of my Domain. Really it would be more accurate to say that I was trying to be the Queen of the Castle. Yes, my gender expression somehow got lumped in with that other "guilty" pleasure. While I did fantasized about girls, I also dreamt of acting like, dressing like and even being a girl. A common thread in all of my fantasies was that I could do all those feminine things while in public so that the whole world could see how I truly felt about myself. The thought terrified me and yet I found it very attractive. So attractive in fact that I actually acted on it a from time to time by wearing women's underwear or a blouse under my coat while out. Each time I did that I felt guiltier than I did the last time. As much I as longed and hoped and wished that I could freely express myself, being a teenager I knew that the world was a cruel place, especially for someone as different as I. In time I vowed to bury those feelings forever and just be a "normal" guy. What a huge mistake.

Running Away - My late teens and early twenties found me not only denying my transgendered desires, it found me running at full speed away from them. I tried to immerse myself in all sorts of masculine endeavors. The mere thought of someone thinking I was in any way feminine infuriated me. I remember one time while with a group of my friends one of the girls was fooling around trying to smear lipstick on me. I reacted so violently (verbally, not physically) that I actually scared everyone present. This loathing of my transgendered side lasted a few years.

A Reawakening - I'm not really sure how or why, but I began to once again allow those thoughts to creep in from time to time. Still, when I did allow them to slip out I always felt guilty afterwards. Then a major event happened within my life....Let me break in to tell you all that what I am about to say is not something I am proud of in the least. I really wanted to gloss over this part, but my damn honesty prevents it....The life changing event that occurred was the death of my father. Yes, I realize that I am insinuating that my father's death had a *positive* effect on my life and I am sad to say that in part it did. Don't get me wrong, I did love him and appreciate the good things he brought into my life, it's just that he was also an anchor for the shame and guilt I felt about my transgendered side. Once I grieved his loss I was able to reexamine my transgendered feelings with a new set of eyes. What I slowly started to conclude was that being transgendered was not as grievous a sin as I had been taught. Still it was certainly not something I thought the world at large could ever accept.

I Take a Chance - By the time I was engaged to be married I no longer able to deny that my crossdressing and transgendered feelings were a part of me. In fairness to my spouse to be I *had* to tell her. What a colossal risk I felt I was taking! What if she reacted badly and exposed this side of myself to the world? I felt for certain that if I was exposed I would be an outcast. You see even though I had progressed internally I was certain the public could never accept the real me as anything but a weirdo and an oddity. Despite my fears I somehow got up the courage to tell her and much to my surprise she did not reject me. Instead she tried to understand, but made it clear that my crossdressing was to be our secret....I agreed. That was my second big mistake.

Coming out of my shell (sort of) - Over the next few years I fell happily into the grove of limiting my crossdressing to the confines of my home. At the time I was sure that being able to express myself in private would be enough for me. Looking at the situation now I can't imagine how I thought that, but I did. One factor was that I thought that I had been pretty lucky to find even one person who would put up with my transgendered side. Even if she did not support me whole heartily, at least I was no longer alone. Public outings were something that I secretly desired, but in no way could I see that happening. I resigned myself to the fact that this was as good as it ever was going to get.

Back into Exile - Probably I could have limped along forever with the limited level of expression of my feminine feelings I had gained up to that point in my life, but having kids changed all that. Once the kids were in the picture my wife wanted to see my crossdressing disappear. Wanting what was best for the kids I allowed myself to be almost totally pushed back into the closet. It will be no surprise to anyone to hear that I found that after years of "freedom" it had become impossible for me to accept this situation for very long. As a result I began to grow very unhappy again. The only difference in my unhappiness this time was that I *KNEW* what was causing it. I had progressed too far and just could not bottle it all in again. This exile of my transgendered side caused me more then ever to want total freedom to be myself. The need to get these feelings out somehow got so great that I began to take stupid risks. For instance I would find myself walking into a store while in drab to try on dresses. If that was not bad enough I would always have to come out of the dressing room to check myself out in the mirror in full view of everyone. People were always amused, but my feelings were that it was a small price to pay my for my gender expression. I was on a dangerous course.

She's Gonna Blow! - The pressure of trying to hold in my transgendered feelings got to be too much and I had to do something before my reckless behavior got me into trouble. I was able to locate MOTG through a thera-

pist and with my wife's blessing went to my first meeting (incidentally, I later found out that she hoped I would "Get the help I needed there" sort of like an AA for the transgendered I guess). For the first time in my life I met others like myself. It was like discovering Bigfoot, they really did exist! Though the meeting was not public, there were plenty of people and I was able to be myself in front of them. Admittedly I was nervous, but for the first time in a long time I felt good about myself.

Letting Go - After I had found an outlet and a support network for my transgendered side it began to blossom. Destroying years of guilt and shame takes time, but slowly it began to happen. As I allowed myself to open up Diane began to emerge. My friends tried to get me to open up more, but I moved at my own pace. The only place I would go while dressed as Diane at that time was the monthly MOTG meetings. I was growing more comfortable with myself and yet I still lacked the strength to show my true self to the world. At the same time that Diane was moving into the light my wife and I realized that neither of us were happy in our marriage. After over a year of marriage counseling we decided to call it quits and I got my own place. Pandora's box was about to open.....

"Suddenly" Diane - The first few months on my own were a difficult adjustment for me and believe it or not my crossdressing actually declined during that time. Soon enough though I realized that for the first time in my life I was totally free to be myself. Let me clarify, I was totally free to be myself in my private life. No one to answer to, no one to get upset at me, just me, myself and I. Before long Diane was a regular at all the TG hot spots in New York city and Philadelphia. I still attended the monthly support group meetings and even went sometimes to other groups. I was happy and certainly had fun but something was still missing. It took me awhile to figure out that what I lacked was wholeness. One hand I had my male life, family and friends. On the other was Diane's life, family (MOTG) and friends. The two did not connect and the only way they would was for me to start to bring them together. That is, I had to publicly embrace both.

Here She Is... - My venue to present my whole self was a safe one and one only possible in this modern age. I did it on-line in chat rooms. Not crossdressing chat rooms mind you, but "regular" ones. I found that people could accept me in that forum and before long I was invited to a party at a PUBLIC restaurant. That invite was a something that I had been dreaming of for a long time I had to go! With a good amount of apprehension and a bit of encouragement from my on-line friends, I went. To my surprise not only was I treated with respect, I met new people who quickly became my friends (In fact I met the love of my life that first night. That's another story though...). What that night proved to me was that I could be true to myself and the world could accept the whole me. With that experience under my belt I decided to raise the stakes. I told a friend at work and she too accepted me! Next my mother....acceptance! Then my sisters...more acceptance! As time went on I was able to open up to more and more people. Today, though I am not one hundred percent out, my family, all of my girlfriend's family, several of my friends and coworkers all know that I am transgendered. I go out in public all the time and have yet to have any problems with anyone.

Full Circle - On a recent Saturday night I had to step in to run our monthly MOTG meeting as Stephanie had injured her hand and was on her way to have it x-rayed. Imagine that, me running one of the very meetings which I was afraid to go to just a few years earlier. Now I am the vice-president and people sometimes look to me for the same support I desired when I joined. After the meeting I was out with my girlfriend Mary, her sister and her friend. Or I should say Diane was out hanging with her girlfriends. As I was sitting there with them in the local Bennigans enjoying our conversation I looked around at all the people there and realized something.....I feel happy and free to be myself....again.

If you enjoyed this article and want to read more, check out my web site at: <http://members.aol.com/diane1962/diane.html>

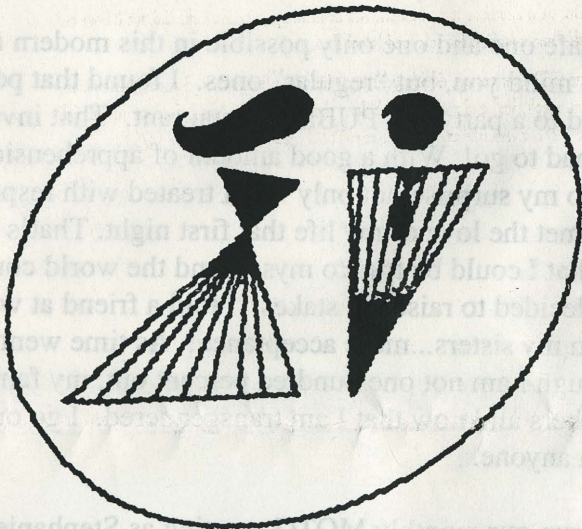
Here are some suggestions for trans shopping. Dress understated. Ask to speak to the manager, either by phoning ahead or when you first enter the store. Say that you are a transgendered person and you would like to shop in their store. Mention that you wish to be discrete and careful not to offend her customers. Ask if you may use the dressing room, or could some arrangement be made to try on items. This could include makeup by the way. Remember you are only a small percentage of their customers. You are there to blend, not startle. Save outrageous costumes and attitudes for the street.

Store of the Month

This is a new feature we're starting this month. We'll review a store that one of our members has recommended as being transgender friendly. Hope you enjoy it. Please send us info on your favorite store, 'cause with two kids in college we have a tiny shopping budget. While many store managers don't mind us as customers, they like it lots better when we buy.

This month's store is a vintage clothing store, Via Vai Vintage in New Hope. They specialize in 40's and 50's clothing. They have a good selection of formal/prom gowns. Their lingerie section was good, but unfortunately mostly the middle size range, nothing for the larger gal. The selection of course will vary as they get in new items. The selection of accessories, particularly purses is excellent.

The sales staff was very courteous and helpful. The changing area is single booths and they are very comfortable with trans people using them. The manager is Carrie and her assistant is Gallatea.



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Remember this year's fifth annual Lesbian, Gay, Bi & Trans Heritage Festival will be held on Sunday, October 11, 1998. It'll be at the same place, the PNC Bank Center (formerly Garden State Arts Center) on the Garden State Parkway. MOTG will have a booth under a big tent. Please come and join us. It's always a great day. It's the safest place to be out dressed in New Jersey that day.

New Facilities ▶ New Date



It's an all new Paradise In The Poconos getaway weekend. We have a fabulous new facility with an indoor heated pool, a jacuzzi, two game rooms, a pub and a night club and it's all ours for an extended 4 day/3 night weekend of pure fun!

Nov 5 - 8, 1998

This year we have a special vendor with clothing, wigs, breastforms, lingerie and more, plus two makeup

artists. We'll also have four seminars, two of them by Dr. Sheila Kirk. And, we'll have our world-famous parties, tag sale, and talent show.

Price: \$350* per person, double occupancy. Includes all activities, 3 parties, 4 seminars, room, meals, tax, and gratuity. No hidden charges! Register now before we fill up. Full details at our web site <www.cdspub.com/Poco.html>. (* Single rooms \$475.)

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an interesting visual display. As one entered, there was a long display table with a lot of artifacts and items from our lives as boys. There were the standard cap guns and toy soldiers. And of course, the standard bathroom "reading", a copy National Geographic with the bare-breasted native women. That of course brought a smile to my face, quickly followed by a stab loneliness and alienation.

While I had a passing acquaintance with those high priestesses of puberty, my interest lay elsewhere. My coming of age was spent in Sears' catalogs. Heaven was sandwiched between the stockings at the beginning of the lingerie section and at the panties at the end. The order of my liturgy read: stockings, nightgowns, slips, bras, girdles and panties. Twice a year there was a new catalog. Hell with the summer solstice, when was the Spring/Summer catalog coming out? Oh the times I spent carefully taking my measurements in preparation. Preparation for the day when I'd be old enough, and have enough courage, to actually go into a store and buy my own panties. The thought that I could wear them all the time, was so impossible that it never even occurred to me.

But there were no Sears' catalogs at the convention. I'd jump over a stack of Geographics full of naked African women to get to a copy of the 1942 Geographic issue with the article on rubber. That article had a photo of a woman in an all-in-one, tightening the corset laces of another woman. They were smiling and laughing. How I wished I were one of them. As far as I know, that is the only picture of a foundation garment ever published by National Geographic. If anyone knows of another, I'd appreciate the reference to it.

Anyway, there is a point to this meander down memory lane. Sylvia has scanned many, many of those pages and published them in a CD. The pictures are extremely high quality and high resolution. You can use a graphics program to read ALL the text on these pages. It is that clear. Of course the file sizes are large. Each page is between 100K and 400K. She has rendered a great service by preserving these images in digital format.

Yours truly has assisted in a small way by loaning her some catalogs to scan. So, if you love 40's thru 70's lingerie, this is the item for you. And by the way, I'm not making a dime off her CD.

May your cups overfloweth,
Vikki



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