

TWENTY

The Official Newsletter of the XX Club, Inc.

The Transsexual Peer Support Group of the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc.

XX (Twenty)

NOV/DEC 1991

Dear Readers,

(With subtlety and diplomacy...)

The first newsletter took longer than expected, and because of my oversight, the October Issue, which almost arrived in November should have been called... November. This left three options. The first was to hastily prepare anything with "November" written on it. The second would have been not to do a November issue at all. Perhaps it's just "in a name", but the option chosen was to do a November-December Issue. From January on, issues of XX should be on-time and as consistent as they can be and still be responsive to the needs of the Twenty Club.

There were a few errors and I am personally sorry if they affected you. There will be an occasional mistake, but there will be fewer as things get settled, and everything is not a "first". The main goals of the newsletter mirror those of the Twenty Club (See Page 3: XX Club Information: Nature). Other than the informational aspects, there is peer support, the personal support and the interaction that one can't get from a book. This interaction is a two way street. It can't be read until it is written, and someone (???) has to write every article that appears in the following issues.

We weren't swamped with submissions, but there are some. Hopefully there will be enough to limit the use of reprinted material. Most of this material is good and some should, and will be printed, but new articles are very important because this isn't a book.

I have heard only positive remarks about Twenty so far, and if I may remind everyone... Anne, Judy, and I all are unpaid volunteers who work very hard to bring this newsletter to you.

This wasn't a very seasonal editorial but Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at XX.

Please don't drive intoxicated,

Brenda

May the holiday season bring you and yours all the happiness you desire

The Staff of XX

Welcome one and all to our fantastic Christmas Party,
Saturday, December 14th, 2:00 PM til 8:00PM.
See page 5 for details

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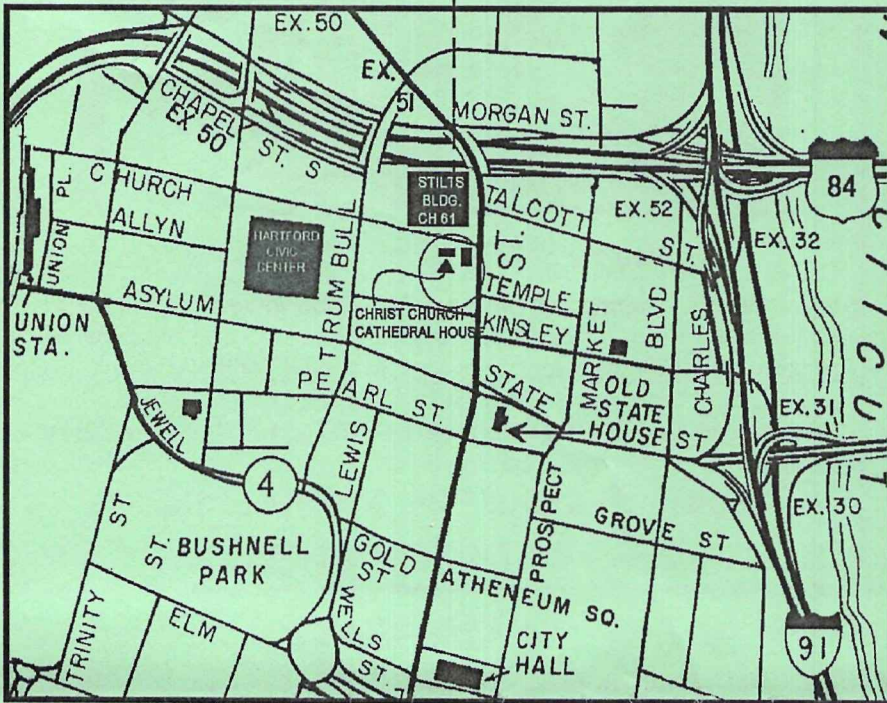
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XX Club Meetings

Regular meetings of the *XX Club* are held the second and fourth Saturdays of every month at 2 PM sharp to 5 PM.

Meeting are held at:

Christ Church Cathedral (Parish House)
45 Church Street
Hartford, CT 06103



Upcoming XX Club Meetings

- Saturday, Dec 14th** - Meeting at Christ Church Cathedral, "XX Club Christmas Party"
 Pot Luck Supper, Please Coordinate At Club Meetings
- Saturday, Dec 28th** - Support Group Meeting
- Saturday, Jan 11th** - Meeting at Christ Church Cathedral, Dr. Elliot Sternthal, MD., FACP
 "Medical Management of Gender Dysphoria"
- Saturday, Jan 25th** - Meeting at Christ Church Cathedral, Support Group Meeting
- Saturday, Feb 8th** - Meeting at Christ Church Cathedral, Dr. Leah Shaffer, Ph.D., President
 Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc.

The XX Club, Inc.
 P. O. Box 387
 Hartford, CT 06141-0387

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Community Liason
 Standing Committee

Treasurer's Report

Balance As Of 24 NOV 1991
 \$ 1,535.88

Note:

A detailed treasurer's report will be published in the January 1991 issue.

The Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc.
[203] 646-8651

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XX (Twenty)

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Newsletter articles referring to specific programs, services and/or products do not necessarily constitute endorsement by the XX Club, Inc., or, the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc. Articles involving medical aspects of gender dysphoria are not intended to be medical advice and readers are cautioned not to make any changes in treatment based upon such information without consulting a physician.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS Newsletter submissions may either be mailed to the XX Club at our address above or submitted at a XX Club meeting. While not necessary, it would be helpful to the editors if your contribution was submitted on an MS DOS computer disk (5-1/4" or 3-1/2") (any word processing format or ASCII). This newsletter represents the XX Club, Inc., and the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc.. For that reason, a submission will not be printed if it does not center on an issue of importance to the transsexual community, or if it in any way slanders any individual or group of individuals. Due to space and time constraints, your submission may not be printed immediately. Unfortunately, we cannot be held responsible for the return of any materials submitted. Please state clearly what name, if any, or any other personal information you want, or don't want included in publication of your submission. Personal information about contributors will not be disclosed. Please give due credit to your sources. All submitted material will be considered, and VERY much appreciated. Material submitted serves as a defacto release to publish. Any photographs submitted must have a signed release from all individuals in the photograph.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please send new address and old address, including zip codes, to "XX" at the above address.

Special thanks and appreciation are extended to Veronica Jean Brown and Becky Ann for their many years of dedicated service through publication of the newsletter, Twenty Minutes, which has ceased publication..

Composition and computer services courtesy of: PC Enhancement, Inc. - Cheshire, CT.

XX Club Information

The XX Club, Inc.

The Transsexual Peer Support Group, of the:
Gender Identity Clinic Of New England, Inc.

P. O. Box 387

Hartford, CT 06141-0387

Tel: (203) 646-8651

Nature: The XX Club is the peer support group of the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc.. Our purpose is to provide knowledgeable information and ongoing peer support to transsexual persons throughout the many stages of their transition, as well as information about the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc.. Friends and relatives are encouraged to attend in the hope of gaining greater understanding and acceptance of their loved one's transsexuality. We are open to both male-to-female, and female-to-male transsexual persons. The XX Club, Inc. is non-profit and non-sexual. We hold no prejudice against any other group of people. We are a peer support group, we are not a dating service, or an instant source of new best friends.

Services: The XX Club, Inc. officially publishes a new monthly newsletter (XX), serving the transsexual community. We meet twice a month (2nd & 4th Saturdays, 2-5PM), at the Christ Church Cathedral; 45 Church Street; Hartford, CT. Meetings are structured to provide support, information, and open accepting understanding. On occasion (no more than one meeting per month), we have professional speakers on educational and medical subjects of interest to transsexual persons. We also have social get-togethers, club parties, outreach to New England and New York gender organizations, and a speakers bureau. There is No Smoking allowed during our meetings. Smoking is permitted during our refreshment break, and after the meeting in designated areas only. In the course of our meeting we have a half-hour refreshment break. People are encouraged to get to know another during the break and help themselves to food and beverages. Please feel free to bring food to share with the group.

Security: We hold no security restrictions on people who wish to subscribe to our newsletter. Persons interested in attending a meeting are welcome to come as long as they have a personal interest in transsexuality, understand the supportive nature of our group, and are willing to respect the anonymity of all persons attending. At no time may another persons name, address, telephone number, or any other personal information be given to another person without full permission. Cameras and recording devices are not allowed at our meetings.

Membership & Meeting Fees: Annual membership dues for the XX Club, Inc., are \$20.00 per year. Dues include a one year subscription to our newsletter, XX. Members and visitors are encouraged to contribute a minimum of \$1.00 per person at each meeting to help defray our expenses. Membership dues and meeting fees are used to contribute to Christ Church Cathedral for the use of their facilities and personnel, defray the cost of newsletter production and distribution, and provide refreshments for our meetings. While these contributions allows us to remain self sustaining, no one will be turned away because of lack of ability to contribute. Sincere thanks to all.

Can We Talk?

No Joan, I don't think that would be a very good idea.

A few weeks ago I got a late evening phone call from the good people up at IFGE. The producers of the Joan Rivers' show were looking for another transsexual. Looking.....it almost seemed as though they were desperate. I was given both office and home phone numbers of a producer and told to call as soon as possible if I found someone interested in appearing.

It seemed as though "sweeps week" the television rating season was upon us and we all know how fascinated the talk shows are with transsexual persons.

This show was to have a theme. They were looking for a pre-operative transsexual that had been on hormone therapy for an extended period of time. The planned questions centered around the importance of hormones and sexual reassignment surgery to the "guests" on the show. What are the financial pressures associated with a transition, and eventual surgery? How long does it take to complete the process? How much patience is necessary to deal with all the pressures? To what lengths would you go to reach your goal? What would you do if you found that you just couldn't achieve your goal?

With the right person as a representative of transsexual persons, and a hostess with the sensitivity and compassion that Joan Rivers has shown on many occasions, this might just not be a bad idea. Could this possibly be an opportunity to present a positive portrayal of transsexual persons as "people", and not merely objects of curiosity?

So I made call after call and tried to find someone. Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey - I heard it all, it seemed. "No way!" "Are you crazy?" "Not me!" "Sounds tempting - BUT!" "How much are they willing to pay?"

What I learned from the effort of calling around was what would have been the perfect story for the show, but they would have turned it down flat as too boring and not sensational enough.

We are a slice of American life. Many of us live our lives from day to day as just another woman, or just another man. Our friends and co-workers often have no idea that we were ever anything other than we appear to be. This is often the result of long hard work, and overcoming constant obstacles. Why risk public exposure?

We are not a group of freaks and wierdos! We are a diversity of people with just one aspect of our existence as a common factor. Some of us have the looks and attributes that made for an easier transition and acceptance into mainstream society, some are less fortunate. Some of us are highly intelligent, high achievers - some are not. Some of us have beautiful personalities, some have personalities that are in various states of disorder. Some of us are nice people, fun to be around, and yet some of us are miserable, nasty people and a chore to even tolerate. The bottom line - we represent a cross section of humanity.

What we do for our livings are equally fascinating. I know of: Airline Pilots, Auto Mechanics, Bakers, Bankers, Computer Consultants, Corporate Presidents, Carpenters, Clerks, Cosmetologists, Dentists, Educators, Electricians, Electrologists, Engineers, Executives, Farmers, Fathers, Hairdressers, Homemakers, Husbands, Mothers, Musicians, Nurses, Psychologists, Photographers, Physicians, Police Officers, Professors, Programmers, Prostitutes, Sales Persons, Secretaries, Students, Surgeons, Television Anchorpersons, Unemployed, Wives, Writers.

So Joan, can we talk? If we did we just might ruin the mystique of the stereotypical transsexual. If we do talk, we do it our way, complete with our helping professionals, and our world respected gender authorities. These are the special men and women that dedicate so much of their time and energies so that we may live a life of congruence and fulfillment.

Sincerely,

Anne C.
President - The XX Club, Inc.

Note: A copy of this letter was sent to the producers of the Joan River's show along with this issue of XX.



"BE ALL" 91

MURPHY'S LAW REPEALED

by Susan MacDonald

I originally wrote the article below at the request of Gloria Wright, the Chicago Gender Society's (CGS) president, for stories of the members' "Be All" experiences. It first appeared in the September issue of "The Primrose", the monthly publication of the C.G.S.

To those of you who are not familiar with me, and/or the "Be All You Want to Be" conventions, allow me to introduce myself and give a brief description: I am a 45 year old pre-op TS who has just returned home to Connecticut from living in Chicago and environs for the past two years. I first "came out" in Chicago and was an initially inactive, later active member of the CGS. Anticipating my return to Connecticut, I joined C.O.S. in May, and later, The Twenty Club.

The "Be All" conventions are the Midwest's primary gender community events. The I.F.G.E., in conjunction with local groups, holds these 4 day educational seminars and entertainment shows yearly in one of 4 cities; Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Detroit. This past June 6-9, the Paradise Club of Cleveland did the honor, and the fine, up-to-date Airport Marriott, just north of Hopkins International Airport in suburban Brook Park was chosen as the venue. Intensive seminars, divided into 4 "tracks" (for TV's, M-to-F, F-to-M, TS's and wives/SO's) took

up most of the days (and evenings), but the luncheons and dinner hours provided ample opportunities for fun, with a continuous fashion show, a talent contest and a fancy dress ball, to name but a few.

O.K., I'll admit it: I often procrastinate, don't plan very well, and fail to consider alternatives—inevitably leading to disaster.

Sometimes though, miracles do happen, and things seem to work out in the end. Such was the case with my experience at the "Be All" this June. Right off the bat, I had no intention of going until the April meeting, when Jackie, a C.G.S. member, asked for a companion to share expenses. Even with this, I hemmed and hawed and didn't make the reservation until five days before the convention. Needless to say, I didn't receive any advance information. Of course, I packed too many clothes (lately, I've been doing everything I used to criticize GG's for.), and decided not to sleep before leaving at 11:30 p.m., figuring I could catch a few Z's in Jackie's truck. Wrong! Did you ever try to lean back in a pick-up? I don't have to tell you that glass doesn't make the ideal pillow. Figuring also that we would get a room early (we arrived at 7:30 a.m.), I decided to travel as a guy. Wrong again! As we didn't get the room until after 3:00 p.m., I had the distinct pleasure of being the only masculine attired person in the TS seminar, which lasted the entire 1st day.

My next snafu was leaving my credit card at the IFGE table. Actually, I knew as soon as I left the room, but as the TS seminars were joined by 10 minute breaks, I figured I could get it later. Wrong again! In my rush to see as much as possible, it slipped my mind. This was followed by a misunderstanding with a Paradise Club member, who told me that the reason I didn't have a dinner voucher for that night was because the TS seminar did not include the dinner theater outing. Although I was very tired, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to dress as myself for dinner in the hotel's better (it was the only one I was aware of, not having explored the hotel) and, of course, much more expensive restaurant. This time, I appeared to be the only crossdressed patron. (As you can see, I have reasons for thinking that I can't win!)


After dining on shrimp capelini, I charged the meal to my room, the number of which I vaguely remembered, but of course transposing two of the numbers. I did tell the maitre' d my still legal name and that I was with the Be All. He said, "Sure, no problem". I should have known better!

The next day, I was walking past the registration table and heard my name mentioned. I did an about face and was eye-to-eye with Karen Marie, the Paradise Club President. An embarrassing xerox copy of the restaurant check, with "no such room number" and "who is this person?" scribbled across it was in my accuser's hands. My promise to pay was met with rather skeptical looks. We all had a good laugh though, when it was reported that the restaurant manager's name was also MacDonald and that the staff thought he may have come in dressed to check up on them!

At this point, my luck abruptly changed. At the luncheon, my name was pulled out of a hat. I was the winner of a free make-over, but to receive the award I had to listen to a chapter and verse review of my snafu's in front of almost 300 people. (My credit card was then publicly returned, with an embarrassing flourish, I might add!) I must report that it was worth it, but of course I still had to run down the hall to the appointment like a mad woman with a towel substituting for a wig and make-up! The following evening brought awards ceremonies and another drawing: with a very audible groan, and a "I don't believe this", Karen Marie announced that I was the winner of free admission to the 1992 Be All. Of course, once again I had to endure the litany in front of everybody.

The dinner story had yet another twist. When I tried to pay for it at check-out time, I was told by the hotel staff that it had been taken care of! Thinking that I was now on a roll, I bought two lottery tickets - unheard of for me. It was only later that I realized that good luck comes in three's, and I had used my allotment! The only explanations I can come up with for the free dinner was that they either considered me a basket case and took pity, or were remorseful for giving me incorrect information. (Later, I heard that the TS contingent was allowed to attend the dinner theater, but nobody received the voucher.) Well you can take your pick, but please don't tell me!

Even if I had not been the big winner, I would still treasure the experience. While it was my first event of its kind, and I have nothing to compare it with, the knowledge gained, the acquaintances made, and the mutual support shown are worth more than any material prize. Everyone came away a winner. **XX**



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Christmas Party

In order to make our party a success, we need you to please bring some food. No food, no party. Get it? -Judy

You can make a difference this holiday season by bringing a non-perishable food donation to the Twenty Club to be contributed to The Harford County Food Bank.

If you are transitioning and have any un-appropriate clothes that you would like to donate, we will try to find someone who could make use of them.

TRIVIAL CONCERNS (PURSUITS?)

An original article by Jennifer A. of the XX Club

Probably everything in this piece has been written before, and expressed better; I shall, nevertheless, cast discretion to the wind and blithely proceed. It's like swimming: you can read all the manuals, but nothing can substitute for real experience—the learning process of actually getting your little tootsies (and all those other body parts, such as they are) wet. So, here goes.

See, first you have to come up with some cute, intriguing title with which to snag the unsuspecting reader—that's the easy part, just for starters. Then you've gotta formulate a great batch of hot, burning ideas into a semicoherent whole for written presentation; only the problem is, once [you think] you're done it looks sort of stupid in retrospect. Maybe REALLY dumb, and then it's way too late. Then later you come across a brilliantly written account of the same thing that probably everyone else but you has read and can quote chapter and verse and you feel like the lowest form of life on earth, and by then it's REALLY too late. Sigh...

So, trivial concerns. All those seemingly little things of immediate life-and-death importance that occupy some of the worst waking moments of your life. The heavily emotional, non-rational aspects. Like especially those tentative stages of early public passage. (I'm sure many of you are well past this; if so, then feel free to fast forward here if you haven't already.) LIKE, the worst-case scenario of blatant law-breaking, the ever-popular 'Oh, gee, I've really GOT to go to the bathroom,' which could conceivably land you in a DIFFERENT can, one decidedly not of your choosing. Solution? Easy, no problem! Simply plan ahead. Don't drink anything, and don't even THINK of LOOKING at Anne's high-octane coffee. HA! Wasn't THAT trivial?! But still, you worry.

Or maybe 'Why is that Troglodyte (not to be confused with "hermaphrodite") leering at me? Am I moving strangely? Has my wig slipped askew? Oh, God, will it fall off? Are my "breasts" riding up again?' No problem! Walk on by (like in the song), forget it, TRY to let it go. But you can't really, not deep down where the wild things lurk.

Or how about 'Am I dressed (and made up and coiffed) appropriately for the circumstances?' (Which includes XX Club meetings—severely complicated by seeing so many others, who have probably gone full-time, so completely and naturally at ease in attire ranging from shorts and halter tops [envy, envy] to whatever.) Maybe most of you are used to dealing with this by now or possibly ignoring it, but for someone new it's not so easy figuring all these things out. Honest feedback is hard to get, its reliability sometimes clouded by good intentions. So I worry. Trivial?

Like my mother and her mother before her [Gosh! Is this genetic??] I tend to worry about trivial things. Things that seem trivial to others, or so trivial you'd be embarrassed to mention them to anyone else. Like which lipstick to wear, or NOT to wear, and why, and getting it on your teeth. Or silly little things that men make fun of, like fretting over lost nails that took WEEKS to grow (and seem to split

with alarming frequency now, people say, because of the estrogens coursing through your fingers), which is right up there with trailing unawares a strip of toilet paper from your skirt waist. A nasty run you're stuck with for hours, an inopportune stain on your blouse—the list goes on. One is quickly seized by abysmal panic: 'Omigod! Do I look like a total idiot or what?' Or, even worse, 'AM I a total idiot?!' Possibly, possibly.

But how much—if any—of this AGIDA [or, for you Sicilians, ACITO, which I cannot easily pronounce] is really necessary? How much stems from ego, on the one hand, "to be the best you can be," and how much from basic insecurity? Hard to say. I'd love nothing better than to BE ABLE once and for all to sort this out and dispose of the excess psychological baggage. And, speaking of baggage, what about those various articles whose function is to constrict here or pad there, or cover up this or that imagined (or real!?) visually discrediting fault? Where does it all end? Wigs and hair transplants, breast implants, rhinoplasties, tracheal shaves, etc. Like, maybe if someone came out with a decent nose compressor or Adam's apple exterminator, they could put quite a few plastic surgeons out of business. And, of course, "cosmetic" surgery is NOT covered by your local friendly insurance policy. Surprised? You shouldn't be, dear. Please have the phrase "not covered" stamped deeply into your financial psyche for future reference.

Head games. But, no. Here I am mired in the thick of time—time as molasses, as it were—glunked down solid inside XY's current stage of androgenous bodily evolution. Will those pills really work? Will anything ever grow there? DRAT that epiphyseal closure so many years ago, no hips! And, lifting our sights a bit higher, the Rocky Mountains themselves will probably erode first, before these baby TETONS could ever hope to approach grandeur.

And now, the flip side, good ole XY. Yes, he is beginning to get more and more stares in public (as XY), I wonder why? Just another normal longish-haired male who's probably decidedly underweight (anemic-looking?) with plucked eyebrows, longish fingernails, and oscillating facial hair length, depending upon which days of the week he has electrolysis scheduled. But that's okay; so far he's been able to fend off inquiries with little white lies. ALL DONE, conversely, all these indignities nobly suffered, lest—HEAVEN FORBID—those ignorant morons on the street should gaze upon Jennifer with anything BUT complete lust, immeasurable respect and admiration in their longing eyes. More trivialities, you say, and—Alas!—I must reluctantly agree.

So. Then there's the politics of being "read," you know? A subject way, way overly scrutinized, which only serves to ratchet that anxiety index up another several notches. Is it really true that the TS party line says if you're REALLY a woman trapped in a man's body then it should not properly be called "being read"? But rather "being mistaken for a man"? Well, gosh darn! Not too pleasant, whatever it's called. Perhaps one of you gentle readers could persuade Alex Comfort to pen a sequel, perhaps "The Joy of Passing," and be done with it. There may be those who live only to brazen their way through the whispered giggles and stares; as some of you may have guessed by now, I am NOT that kind of girl. (But let us not be accused of casting aspersions at T's of a different feather.) If you really enjoy seeing a woman playing a man playing a woman, go rent

the video of "Victor, Victoria" again, it's great for laughs. But I digress.

Of course, and almost as a footnote, there's the ever-ongoing search to figure out "how I got to be the way I am." While an interesting topic, this brings to mind Oscar Wilde's familiar observation, via Gwendolen: "Ah! That is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them." Or not. Whatever. "So, what's the point of this?" I hear you ask, your restlessness rising. "Why waste any more of my valuable time on this?" The point is, if something's worth doing, it's worth doing badly. Yes, badly. It's a learning process, in many respects, necessary in order to progress to one's ultimate goals (plural). That means venturing forth, making mistakes, worrying a lot, but DOING—even if doing badly—and LEARNING, and sometimes screwing up REALLY BAD, but learning how to handle that, too. Finding out if all of this really IS worth doing, for YOU.


Well then, in that light, why should these things—as maddening, frustrating and fearful as they are—be considered trivial, after all? Perhaps only by comparison with other, more weighty, NOT-SO-TRIVIAL concerns. Longer-range concerns, the ones with heavy downsiderisks. The other things which—like it or not—you GOTTA really worry about. And then, when you're done worrying (to a point), you gotta do. Like, informing family members and friends of long standing, each of whom could very well reject you in ways worse than imaginable; but you still gotta do it. AND negotiating to secure or maintain employment through transition for that all-important reliable, continuing stream of income. Or legal things. Ever tried changing your name and designated sex? On everything? On all your official identifying documents, work history, property, bank accounts, insurance policies, subscriptions, credit reports, etc., etc.? Sounds like fun, n'est-ce pas? Touching all the bases. And sure, Oops! There'll be a few that slip by, no big deal. Physical risks? A close friend once made the mistake of letting a guy pick her up who then beat her senseless and robbed her, all the time knowing WHO she was, simply because she didn't conform to his idea of conformance to some version of "God's law." Had she been a "GG", in the parlance, she would likely have been better treated (though how MUCH better, I wonder). What she did was extremely foolish, to be sure; but still, that's a hate crime, from which we are, for the most part, not generally protected as legitimate victims. Again, the list goes on.

And I've GOT to put in a word about those officials who've made life THAT MUCH MORE difficult for us by not allowing one's chosen designation of sex to be displayed upon one's driver's license during the REQUIRED period of living the chosen rolefull-time prior to SRS. Surely, common sense and a modicum of compassion, with a smidgen of well-directed lobbying thrown in, MIGHT conceivably rectify this patently unfair situation. At least in Connecticut. Other states HAVE made precedent. Maybe more on that at another time.

But perhaps the most fundamental dread, amongst this seemingly endless stream of uncertainties we face, and one we try to ignore, is the statistical offering that only 5 to 10 percent of us make it to where we need to go. For whatever reason. Being scared to the depths of

your soul that some "disabling" contra-indication that you can't change (like phlebitis?), or some additional requirement that you can't meet (like \$\$\$), will surface and blow your entire life out of the water, boom! You're dead!

Finally, there's the one you hesitate to tell your shrink about lest he consider you borderline schizophrenic, or worse: can anyone really determine where XY ends and I, Jennifer, take over? Is there really only one person in there, or twelve? No, I'm NOT crazy, I only want to change the sex of my body. Is THAT too much to ask for, on a pleasant afternoon? I'm still ME, of course; any child can tell you that if you ask her WHO she is. But other people naturally assume, at some point, that XY really is dead, that you've killed him off as glibly as Agatha Christie, and now some lunatic female is traipsing around in his place. Whoa!

But wait! How can they tell? Well, like on that famous TV (?) commercial, must be the SHOES! It's GOTTA be the shoes! Definitely the shoes! The pumps. But, but, hold on a second, boys don't wear pumps! At least, USED to be they didn't! What's that? You're NOT a boy?! Oh, well, I suppose nothing's sacred anymore. C'est la vie. 

Things to think about

By Holly
Submitted for printing from the IFGE

You believe you're a transsexual. What should you do about it? Since it's a self-diagnosed condition (if you hadn't said anything, there is no way anyone could tell by looking, if you didn't want them to know) your belief is important. TSs come in all the varieties of a standard male or female (yes, there women who feel they are "a man inside", also!) and the condition is psychological rather than physiological.

However, there are some male-to-female TSs who have a better chance of making a successful sex reassignment/gender change. They are not too big in the frame, not too tall (though six foot women do exist, they are two or three in a thousand adult females) and with features are not too craggy or rugged. There is no good fix for the skeleton, unless the TS started before maturity to take female hormones or other treatment; the face can be remodeled at considerable expense, the adams apple can be shaved, and most of the fleshy parts of the body will change under the effects of hormones. If you are far too tall, or have lost your scalp hair, there are major problems.

One distinguishing feature of european men vs women is the beard, and secondary body hair. For an adult male to live as a woman, the beard and all traces of it must be removed, by electrolysis. This is a major expense and consumes a lot of time. For average males, around 100 hours of treatment is a MINIMUM, for facial hair. Body hair can be handled by waxing or a hair-pulling machine. With hormone treatments and repeated plucking or waxing, the arm hair will come back much less thick. Few of us can take as much as four hours a week, so the epilation will take a year or more, AND THIS CANNOT BE DONE WHILE LIVING AS A WOMAN. It must be

complete, or nearly so, FIRST, and it will cost over \$4000. Incidentally, for the female-to-male transsexual, the treatments will start the beard growing, and this process is essentially irreversible. Should she wish to "go back" there will be a lot of electrolysis needed.

If electrolysis is started, nothing really permanent has been done to the male face, since shaving is quite common in our society. Female hormone therapy is more permanent, but can be carried on for some months while working as a male, until breast and hip changes become evident to the casual observer. When hormones and electrolysis have done their job, and the transsexual has learned the skills of dressing, makeup, and comportment that any twenty-year-old female knows, she to all who look, a female. She can start cross living, and a year or so later, if all goes well and she has the money required, she can have the operation on her genitals to make it possible for her to function sexually as a female, insofar as a sterile woman can after a total hysterectomy.

In order to obtain hormones, or to qualify for SRS (reassignment surgery) it is necessary to find a doctor or gender clinic or qualified mental health professional and start on the way to meeting the requirements of the "Standards of Care". The surgeon has to be convinced that you aren't going to change your mind after the operation. The shrink has to talk to you, and of course try to talk you out of it, since there is no way to measure transsexuality. The question of love vs infatuation can be undone by a divorce court, but testicles are not reattachable. The services of a competent psychiatrist are as expensive, for the whole job as those of the electrolysis, though they use less time. If it's an MD's services, they may be covered by insurance. The cost of hormone pills may be over a thousand dollars the first year, but that also may be covered by insurance. After SRS, the required dosage of female hormones comes down to that required by a postmenopausal female, as there are not any male hormones left to overpower.

If your obeisance to the system is satisfactory, and you have the two required letters from "shrinks", you can then spend the rest of your money on surgeons and hospitals. Sometimes breast augmentation, a tracheal shave and a nose job are done as part of the same stay. In any case SRS is a major bit of surgery, and if a mistake is made in any detail, there will be lifelong repercussions. It seems like this is no time to save money.

Prices for the SRS and hospital package run from as little as \$7000 including air fair to as much as \$20,000. Unlike spending the same amount of money on a new car, these people want cash in advance. 36 month financing is not available. If you couldn't save the money as a male, you certainly won't be able to do so as a cross-living almost complete female; there is still the pay differential.


The above is a rough itinerary. I haven't done it; but a dozen people I know have. None will admit regrets. All agree that to start with, get electrolysis underway. I carry a razor (battery powered) in my purse, but I spend almost half my time, the time I'm working, as a male. If I were a full-time "woman", there would be no way that I could get away with that.

You become a woman as the result of hormone treatments. That is

what causes people to look at you and call you "miss", whether you are in jeans and a t-shirt or all dressed up. If you can't pass in jeans and a t-shirt, you are not ready for genital surgery. The matter of voice: there is some literature, there are voice coaches, and then there is even vocal cord surgery. In most transsexuals and in many "new women" the voice is still at the point where people on the telephone think they are speaking to a man. Some of the problem is pitch, intonation, and timbre; but the way you talk, the decisiveness or the lack of it, the vocabulary, and the mental attitude are also important. Even in books, you may be able to tell the dialogue of two men speaking together from that of two women, and in the mixed gender case, there is even more difference between male and female speech. I have no answer to this, I am however sure there IS a problem. Again, any twenty-year-old woman knows how to handle it by experience. I have met young women who speak like a man, it is immediately evident, but most people find it surprising, and a "new woman" wants to avoid surprises. As a matter of statistics, less than ten percent of those who start the sex-change process get surgery; perhaps another ten percent find that the problems they had are solved simply by living full time, without surgery, but the rest must have decided that the process was too difficult and too expensive to continue. Apparently, they were not suffering from their condition to go the whole way. If one has the fifteen or twenty thousand in a retirement account, and waits a dozen years, perhaps one can go somewhere and live off the money and be a woman whenever it seems convenient, and who needs surgery for that?

XX

*If you continually look down, you see the gutter,
and the trash.
If you hold your head high and look up,
you just may see the light!*



by Anne C.

I wrote the following submission. I feel it fits into the requirements that everyone else has to adhere to. Please let me stress and reiterate that these are my opinions and views only, not the newsletters.

Brenda

Balance and Temperament

An original article by Brenda P.

Perhaps sexuality typing in itself will be always be a socially acceptable form of prejudice. Body appearance, names, pronouns, pink and blue, lace or leather, cars and dolls etc. are some of society's accepted indicators of gender. To me gender identity involves how a person feels about oneself and how a person reacts in ones environment with everyday life. To complicate matters, how one presents oneself doesn't always have anything to do with the person inside. Adding even more facets to the picture is that a

persons preference, (if any) does not necessary have anything to do with a persons gender, but what in your heart you want with another for... might.

The body is commonly thought to be the most greatest indicator of a persons sexuality and gender. Yet you might find the most feminine person with the a masculine body, and the opposite may be exist as well. Who is to say that a person is or is not gender dysphoric because of ones body appearance.

(SARCASM, IGNORE: (If you are too; tall, fat, bald, small, large, deep in voice, short in the hands, hairy, hairless, old, young, poor, rich, known, weak, small... then it's really not worth it... because one can never accept mediocrity. Do the best you can, and if your aren't perfect, let it gnaw on you to the bitter end. Lift yourself by pointing out those things in other people that you think just aren't perfect. Anything not done better than everyone else is just a sheer waste of time. Your personal happiness is far less important than your relative status. If anyone is fortunate for anything, hate them deeply for it. If someone doesn't pass well... then they just aren't gender dysphoric are they (?), ignore them or everyone will think you aren't either. If you meet another transitioning person, apparently newer, nothing that person has to say that can be relevant or learned from. If you are at a meeting of other transsexual people and someone new arrives, don't be the first to try to communicate with that person.))

It is sometimes difficult to say what is a man or woman without reiterating old stereotypes, although some stereotypes might not get old by chance, and I'm leaving the selection to the reader. I don't want to hinder the group of people I am joining, by becoming a part of it. My greatest reasons for me becoming a woman are; because I need to, just because I want to and I even dare say... because I am.

(FURTHER SARCASM: (Fill your trash-can not only with those things that are necessary to complete your transition, but everything held dear until yesterday. If you are a woman; act dumb, use excuses (like it's a woman's precognitive to be late and change you mind), let the door slam in everyone's face behind you, Talk too much, get hysterical on occasion, check your make-up at highway speeds with bumper-to-bumper traffic, let Provera be your excuse for everything, and when using the bathroom, don't verify the seat position, and when you fall in, blame it on someone else. If you are a man; be unsensitive, yell quite a bit, stay at bars until dawn while your loved ones are home worrying about you, don't invite your wife on that fishing trip, do strange things to prove your masculinity, make your wife a sports-widow, let androgens be your excuse, and when using the bathroom, leave the seat up. Go through your transition, but do it to; impress others, because you like guys or girls and you just can't deal with that, because you like those clothes or that nifty chain wallet, for the increased wages, because you look like and would make a good (?), as an escape from daily pressure, because your friend did, or wants you to. Rest assured: hormones are just another recreational drug that have no side-affects or inherent risks. Female hormones won't affect your ability to perform as a man, and the breasts will just be re-metabolized if you stop. If you stop taking male hormones your voice will get higher, and facial hair will fall out. (HA!))

I very often hear the terms like: transsexual, TS, strait, gay,

transvestite, republican, white, jewish... without hearing the word "person" after, I feel remembering that "people are still people" doesn't get redundant very quickly. On the way to categorizing and sorting every living thing out remember that there are very few absolutes. I have heard the word "transsexual" in the media... often. I don't seem to recall hearing "gender dysphoric person"... as much. I hear PEOPLE refer to themselves as transsexuals, like some inanimate object, like that is all they are, and all we/they do.

For lack of a better term... gender dysphoria syndrome, seems to mean that I am not happy with my gender. I am me, and neither pleased or dismayed with my gender, but... I want to change my body... somewhat. Perhaps the term should read "lifestyle and sexual configuration dysphoria syndrome", akin to the Kinsey Scale that graphically represents hetero- to homo- sexuality. If you use this scale I feel you are more of less have made the decision that internal gender is a myth, and that sexuality in always directly tangible to gender.

(SARCASM, THE LAST OF IT: As soon as you develop breasts, be in at least one erotic/porno movie and three magazines using your male equipment...like a male. The books state, "transsexuals don't get along with homosexuals", "transsexuals don't get along with transvestites", so if you have any friends that fall into that category, discard them immediately. The books also state, "transsexuals don't get along with psychiatrists" so don't treat them as living beings. If you are a psychiatrist and are gender dysphoric there is only one honorable thing to do. If you go on a talk show, do speak for all everyone, everywhere. The bottom line: CREATE AND PERPETUATE STEREOTYPES.)

Money sometimes is the bottleneck in ones transition. It's a shame the government offers little help in gender matters. At the time (DSM-3), rumors indicate that gender dysphoria syndrome is a mental illness. In time this may change, maybe to a "social construction" (Sexual Landscapes) that officially might not exist at all, or a hobby. I feel a dollar will never fall on an illness that doesn't really exist, or one that is possessed by so few voters.

So what does DSM; 4,5,6... have in store? I don't always rest easy knowing that my life hangs in the balance of what brands of psychology and psychiatry and endocrinology are fashionable at any given moment. Further rumors have it, that in DSM-2 homosexuality... and oral sex (?) were mental illnesses.

I hope I have the balance and temperament: to: relate something that's entertaining and interesting, accept myself and complete my transition, on both the outside and inside, live as and be woman for the rest of my life, and not forget where I was on the outside and what I have always been, learn by my mistakes and do well so others will have a chance, and care about myself and have some (LOTS) left for others.

XX

(Pseudo) Deep Thoughts by Jill Handy

After waking up from SRS, I think a good thing to say would be, "My gall bladder isn't feeling any better".

This article was obtained from Genderline on the Compuserve Informational Service and is Copyright 1990, Dallas Denny, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033

Tripping the Light Fantastic Staying Sane and Whole While in Transition

by Dallas Denny

Gender reassignment is one of the most radical and disruptive things that an individual can do. It strains and often severs social relationships, imposes economic hardships, involves a good deal of physical pain and a great deal of psychic pain, and requires study and hard work in order to even begin to hope to pass in the gender of choice. Transition must be pursued in the face of the general disapproval of society and the specific disapproval of loved ones, the reluctance of the medical community to provide services, a scarcity of resources, and countless legal and social obstacles. The body of one sex must be somehow whipped into the semblance of that of the opposite sex, generally after puberty has wreaked irreversible somatic changes. Old behavioral patterns must be unlearned and new ones added. A new life must replace the old.

The transsexual person runs a gamut of obstacles, with no guarantees of success. Indeed, probably fewer than ten percent of those who set out to change their gender succeed in doing so. And yet, tens of thousands of people are happily and successfully working and living in the gender of choice. Transition is possible. It can be done. It just can't be done without disruption and sacrifice and hard work. It can't be done without stubborn determination. It can't be done without money. It can't be done in the absence of support, and it can't be done without pain.

My crossdressing friends tell me that the transsexual people they know are no fun: "They whine all the time. They're preoccupied with their problems and their bodies. They need to lighten up." To them I say, "Please appreciate the tremendous pressures that these people are experiencing. Please understand that every aspect of their lives is affected by their decision to change gender, and that they must become somewhat self-absorbed in order to prevail against odds which are nearly insurmountable." And to those who are in transition, I say, "Lighten up!"

I don't have the space in this article to point out all the potential hazards in the mine field of transition. OUR SORORITY simply isn't big enough. ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA isn't big enough. You'll have to look elsewhere for that (you'll find a listing of such resources at the end of this article). I do have some strategies and approaches that may be of help. Here they are.

1. **Keep Your Sense of Humor** (and if you don't have one, cultivate one). You will only be as unhappy as you allow yourself to be. You can plod miserably along, or you can enjoy yourself. You can find humor in the ludicrous situations you will find yourself in and the things people will say which have a whole different meaning because of your genderal status. Those you meet along the route will prove amusing, if you allow them to be. They will be your comrades in arms, and some of them will become your friends. If you approach transition with a sense of wonder and awe, your experi-

ences will be more pleasurable than they will be if you inject fear and guilt. Yes, it'll be damn difficult, but you can still have a good time. Being miserable and depressed does not make for a good prognosis.

2. **Don't Allow Transsexuality to Become Your Entire Life.** You shouldn't go through transition as if you were Ahab in pursuit of the White Whale. Ahab needed to get a life, and so do you. You mustn't defer your entire existence in anticipation of a hypothesized bliss once you jump genders. An empty life in the gender of original assignment will probably become an empty life in the gender of choice. Reassignment will not solve your problems; you'll still have the same troubles, but in a different gender. You would do well to have life goals other than transition. You should cultivate friends and interests outside the gender community.

3. **Keep Your Perspective.** You must not allow your transsexualism to become a fantasy or a fetish. As my friend Rachel has said, "You must weave reality back into the fabric." Don't place undue weight on reassignment surgery; it won't magically transform you into a man or a woman. You should at all times know where you are and where you are going, and this should be firmly grounded in reality. You must come to terms with your physical and behavioral assets and liabilities and incorporate them into an emerging identity. You must have realistic ideas about the social roles of men and women, and what sort of man or woman you want to be. Remember that transition is a process—a becoming, if you will. You will be gradually changing. You won't just wake up one morning and find that you are magically different.

4. **Don't Box Yourself In.** You must somehow keep functioning. If you prematurely dismantle your old life, you will be unable to replace it with a satisfactory life in the gender of choice. You will be left with a twilight existence, an identification as a transsexual. And if this negatively impacts your earning potential, you can get stuck, unable to complete the procedures which will produce the bodily changes necessary to successfully pass in the gender of choice (for instance, electrolysis for the male-to-female; reduction mammoplasty for the female-to-male). You must maintain as much support as possible. You should know that in some cases that may mean clinging onto your old identity a little bit longer.

5. **Let Go of Your Crutches.** As your body changes, it will become less difficult to pass. You should rely less on contrivance and incorporate your natural aspects into your presentation. This may mean using your own hair instead of a wig, doing away with padding, and using less makeup. Or it may mean using your birth name, if it has a chance of working, instead of an idealized feminine name. It may mean becoming comfortable with interests or aspects of your personality that aren't a good "fit" in the gender of choice. But whatever your perceived shortcomings are, you will need to face and come to terms with them and let them go.

6. **Sacrifice and Compromise.** Being in transition will cause big changes in your life. You must be prepared to meet all challenges and to give your transsexualism a high priority. You'll be deluding yourself if you think you can maintain your previous standard of living in the face of bills from psychologists, endocrinologists, electrologists, and plastic surgeons. You must maintain your pace. If you delay procedures such as hormonal therapy because of lack

of money or time, or for other reasons, your transition will eventually be delayed. And here I will insert a caveat for the male-to-female transsexual person: Don't put off electrolysis. You'll be sorry if you do. Once you are living in the gender of choice, it will nearly impossible to bring yourself to grow the hair long enough for the operator to grasp it with her tweezers. And passing will be at best a struggle, and quite likely impossible, until the hair on your face is gone or at least appreciably diminished.

7. Be A Good Consumer. You must at all times act with discretion and proper respect for your body. You should not act out of desperation. Although services can be difficult to obtain, they are available. You will minimize your chances of failure if you use competent service providers. Otherwise you will risk delays in obtaining diagnosis (and hence hormones), a regimen of hormones inadequate to masculinize or feminize you, and even botched surgery. You have only one shot at transition, and it is decidedly in your best interest to proceed with reasonable precautions and care, making sure that your doctors know what they are doing.

8. Join a Support Group. It will be to your advantage to find your peers. Support groups can educate you, assist you with referrals, and help you to perfect a masculine or feminine appearance. You will probably make friends with other group members. But more importantly, you will see your peers in action, making decisions both good and bad. By observing them, and by talking with them, you can learn strategies for coping and avoid pitfalls.

9. Follow the Benjamin Standards of Care. The Standards of Care of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., are guidelines to safeguard transsexual people and those who provide services for them. Many transsexual people see them as obstacles to be overcome, and so they are. But by following the Standards of Care, you will minimize your chances of failing in your transition, and maximize your chances of surviving failure, if it does occur. The Standards will let you opt out anywhere short of reassignment surgery. The best of transitions will be painful. The worst do not even bear thinking about. You should not expect a perfect experience, but by exercising common sense and foresight, you will minimize disruption and conflict, and have a smoother ride.

A Brief Resource List

Denny, Dallas. (1990). *Deciding What To Do About Your Gender Dysphoria: Some Considerations For Those Who Are Thinking About Sex Reassignment*. (\$6.00).

Denny, Dallas. (1991). *Discovering Who You Are: A Guide to Self-assessment for Persons with Gender Dysphoria* (\$6.00).

Denny, Dallas. (1991). *Dealing With Your Feelings: A Guide to Coming Out for Persons with Gender Dysphoria* (\$6.00).

Chrysalis Quarterly. (\$30.00/4 issues; includes the three booklets, above).

The above are available from American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033.

Devor, Holly. *Gender Blending: Confronting the Limits of Duality*. (\$14.50)

Elizabeth, Sister Mary. *Legal Aspects of Transsexualism— 1990 Edition*. (\$10.00)

Laing, Alison. *Speaking as a Woman*. (8.00)

Stringer, JoAnne Altman. *The Transsexual's Survival Guide*. (\$20.00)

Stevens, Jennifer Ann. *From Masculine to Feminine and All Points In Between*. (\$22.45)

TV-TS Tapestry Journal. (\$12.00/issue)

The above are available from International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), P.O. Box 367, Wayland, Massachusetts 01778.

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The following article appeared in the magazine "First" in the Dec 2ed, 1991 issue on page 39 and was written by Gene Ruffini. This article was submitted by Anne C.

Thinning Hair: a losing battle

According to one of the nation's leading hair-loss specialists, Douglas Altchek, M.D., of New York's Mount Sinai Hospital, "In the past twenty-five years the number of woman who suffer hair loss has almost doubled."

The culprit: stress. "It causes trauma to the hair follicles and affects hormone levels," says Dr. Altchek.

Testosterone, the hormone that triggers male baldness, is normally found in women in small amounts. "But when women adapt to high pressure lifestyles at home and work, the level can increase and so can hair loss," says Dr. Altchek.

Other causes: excessive use of chemicals (such as bleaches, dyes, hair spray) and heredity. An estimated 20 million American woman have inherited hair loss.

If treated early enough, stress-related hair loss can be reversed, Dr. Altchek says. The first step is to eliminate the source of stress. Scalp stimulation and topical applications or injections of cortisone are also effective for some women.

Rogain is a medication that has proven to reverse some kinds of male baldness. The Upjohn Co. recently received FDA approval to market it for women in the United States. Clinical studies in Europe and the U.S. showed that 63 percent of the women treated with rogain experienced hair growth.

XX



"Tula" Given Certificate of Appreciation by AEGIS: (Left to Right) AEGIS Deputy Director Margaux Ayn Schaffer; Caroline Cossey ("Tula"); AEGIS Executive Director Dallas Denny; Doreen Cossey (Caroline's mother)

The following Press Release was submitted by AEGIS. There also was a letter submitted at the same time with a opposing viewpoint. Both were printed and XX is claiming total neutrality.

Brenda

AEGIS and Friends welcome Tula to Atlanta 28 October, 1991

More than 60 persons were in attendance for a private party held on Sunday, 27 October by AEGIS for internationally famous model Caroline Cossey (Tula) at Petrus, an Atlanta nightspot. AEGIS Executive Director Dallas Denny and Deputy/Spokesperson Margaux Ayn Schaffer presented Ms. Cossey with a framed certificate thanking her for her efforts on behalf of transgendered people and welcoming her to the forming AEGIS Advisory Board.

Ms. Scheffer said, "It is gratifying to see such a spectrum come together for a common cause: heterosexuals, gay males, lesbians, bisexuals, straight crossdressers, female impersonators, transgenderists, and both female-to-male and male-to-female transsexual people.

"We believe that Ms. Cossey will continue to be a magnet to draw together the different segments of our diverse community. We are proud to appoint her to our advisory board."

Ms. Denny said, "We would like to thank Cindy St. Holmes of Petrus for allowing us free use of V.I.P. Room with an open wine bar, and the local gay press for covering the event."

The following letter was submitted by a XX Club member as a response to a morning radio show broadcast in Buffalo New York by radio station WGR. There also was a letter submitted at the same time with an opposing viewpoint. Both were printed and XX is claiming total neutrality.

Brenda

No Thanks Tula!

I am writing on behalf of Western New York's transsexual support group, Crossroads of Buffalo. A short time ago, Tula, a well known transsexual was a guest on WGR's morning radio show, where people are invited to call in and ask questions or voice their opinions.

During the program, Tula stated she was speaking out for transsexuals. Our group does not wish to be represented in any way by this person. Many questions on the program were left unanswered and

some misinformation was given about legal issues concerning us. Specifically, birth certificates, (which CAN have the sex designation changed) and marriage, (which IS possible) after surgery has been completed and legal documents are sent to the state for review. Our group is also angry about a recent layout she did for Playboy magazine. It's true she is beautiful, but the main reason she was in the September 91' issue was for being a famous transsexual. It's bad enough what the tabloids have printed about us, many times making a freak show out of our emotionally painful transition. We feel by posing for these people she allowed us to be even further exploited.

We have a tendency to try and forget our past reassignment surgery and become productive citizens, and live peaceful, happy unstressful lives as possible having a chance for a fresh start in life.

In closing, we truly feel sorry for Tula. She has lost the life she has known as an "ordinary" woman. Like Renee Richards and Christine Jorgenson, she will always have the title TRANSSEXUAL to live down, which people can make very difficult for us as we well know.

If Tula wishes to speak out for us she could become more educated on current happenings in and around the issue and help us instead of creating more confusion about the subject.

It is our groups hope this letter be printed to set the record straight for so many people who were listening to the radio show that morning.

Any individuals who would like to correspond with our group or gather information about the subject should write to:

Crossroads, 3216 Delaware Ave., Suite 102, Buffalo NY 14216

Sincerely Yours,

Vicky F. (Acting Spokesperson)

Ducks!



A fledgling meeting of Transsexually-inclined individuals were engaged in a free form dialogue on gender issues when the topic veered right and started to concentrate on, well... ducks. Now before you move on to the next article or graciously place a call into Bellevue on my behalf let me explain. This is not your Mallard variety for which I speak, nothing served

Peking-style with mint jelly, and not the mascot of a famous theme park. No ticklish feathers or protruding bills; these are far more formidable. They are the confrontational ducks faced by any transsexual in transition.

It all started with someone making an analogy of their personal "schedule" and the factors involved as a process of "putting their ducks in a row". We all have these 'ducks'; in the early stages of transition there may indeed be flocks of them. It becomes very easy for us to spend an inordinate amount of time disciplining them to fit into the rigid patterns we have preconceived. These factors, or ducks can vary widely from noticeable beard growth, to personal relationships, from the climate of your working environment to male pattern baldness, from financial risk to legal status; the list goes on and on., as infinite as your imagination allows.

The curious thing about these little critters is that despite our efforts they are incorrigible. The more defient to order they become, the more the potential for pre-occupation with them grows. Our efforts shift from maintaining our course towards congruency through this misappropriation of our emotional resources.

The ducks start winning.

Many of the people in the support group admitted to having their own assortment of 'ducks' that snip at there heels from time to time. The total population of them varies depending on what period of transition you are in. As one ventures forth and progresses into living full time in their chosen gender a dull truth becomes apparent, not all of the ducks are not what they seem (rather Twin Peak-esque). Using newly acquired hindsight it appears that some ducks were never really there, just mere fabrications of a mind so driven and focused that his or her perception of the world had become slightly thwarted. Given that some of the obstacles delt with never actually existed, one

can begin to dwell over the frustrations of time and energies spent on these obsessive fabrications. Suddenly it breeds anew, webbed feet touching on new ground. New phantom ducks hatch to replace the one's dispelled. The cycle becomes perpetual.

As time passes, maturity fianlly is inevitably thrust upon us. With it comes the acceptance that none of these ducks, real or imagined, will ever cooperate with our chosen paths. Any cooperation is merely an act of sychronicity. The futility of lining up ducks is common. In fact insisting order in a random world has become a central focus in this male-dominated world we live in. We finally get to the point where enough is enough. It is then that truth is finally disclosed; the mist lifts over the bogs, the sun rises and the rustle of wings considering flight is muffled. After years of tending to the flock, the dawn of awareness comes... THERE ARE NO DUCKS!

Let the truth be known boys and girls. Read it again and think about it this time, it really does have more philosophical insight than your average "Nancy" comic. Can you begin to feel a weight being lifted? No ducks. Think of it this way. If any of these factors are indeed 'ducks' in need of alignment then why after all of your efforts do they still defy? Why are they there?? Like Harlot's ghost the only purpose of their manifestation is for the personal reflection of the individual bestowing the visage. The sole reason for their appearance is disclosed when, fianlly, you refute their existance and take a close look at their origin, yourself.

By accepting the road before you with it's curves, crossroads and rest areas and trusting your growing intuition rather than the rigid order once used to instil control the burden will be lifted, and personal success closer and more assured. This is the only true way to exorcise the phantom ducks from your life. Now back on that road to self-fulfillment , one thought will be clearly set in the mind,... As of today, duck season commenses! (what ducks??) - By S.E. Toon



On the 1st and 3rd Sundays on each month to coincide with the schedule of meetings of XX Club in Hartford, a Transsexual Support group meets at 6 Cushing Street in Waltham, MA from 10:00AM to NOON. All Transsexually-inclined people are welcome to attend. This group has been formed by Tiffany Club of New England although membership is not nessary to attend these meetings. If additional information is needed please contact: Vivian Purves at (617) 899-2212.

XX

Letters to the Editor

Dear Brenda,

I am confused. For the last 12 months I thought "XX Twenty Minutes" was run by the XX Club. Back in Sept. or Oct. when I heard that it was no longer published I thought that the club was getting out of the newsletter business. I even wrote to voice my sadness at the loss, even though the last few issues looked more like an advertising medium for "Wildside", it looked like I was losing a connection. And now I receive your new publication and I am confused; but pleased.

I like the new layout and content and am motivated to try to get down for a meeting to get to know the people involved. I especially like Jennifer's "Coming Home" article. Like Jennifer A., Jennifer S. barreled out too. With the aid of my local ACSW and the GICNE, the final stage took four months. It took me two months to find "XX" and then another two months before I dropped my XY (I like your term Jennifer A., do you mind if I use it?) persona forever. I have not regretted one moment of the last eleven months despite a lot of hard times and copious buckets of tears.

Please stay away from sarcasm and other forms of deceptive articles. I expect that I am one of the more gullible people in the world, but there were many times in the old newsletter that I didn't know if the service was real or spurious. I could probably tell the difference now but a year ago I was desperate enough to contemplate writing to some of those fake California addresses.

I also guess that my membership is about to expire so I enclose your form and a check. Thank you for being there,

Jennifer S.

Dear Jennifer S.,

It's regrettable that we (XX) were not mentioned in Twenty Minutes (The End II, The Sequel) as a possible "life-line" resource. Fortunately Becky (Thank You) kindly supplied us with information so we were able to inform XX Club attendees' about the last meeting.

XX was started because the Twenty Club was concerned about the folding of Twenty Minutes. Anne C. volunteered equipment and facilities to produce the newsletter. Anne, Judy, and Angie all worked VERY hard to make the newsletter what it is. The XX Club members will be paying for the materials and postage. Without the articles there would and will be no newsletter (hint).

I think humor and sarcasm are fine as long as readers can identify it as such. I personally will try to maintain some continuity and keep the differences clear. The newsletter is supposed to inform, not mis- inform. As I stated before I will try my best to keep this newsletter responsive to the needs of the Twenty Club.

If I may speak for the entire newsletter staff, thank you for the very positive feedback, and I hope we can continue to be there,

Brenda

Dear Brenda,

Hurrah - I wanted to cry out: "The newsletter is dead - long live the newsletter". I myself am one of those XX Club "ephemeral" members, who seems to have come and gone in the blink of an eye, but the fact is that I am still here and I am still me. The XX Minutes newsletter was often helpful, sometimes annoying but always welcome, and I was sorry to hear that it would cease. Now I am delighted to receive the XX newsletter, alive and well and all decked out in new clothes, - and if we can't relate to a transformation and a name change, who can?

A hearty thank you and good luck. Sincerely

Paula R.

Dear Paula,

Thank you, and we happy that you are pleased with our new newsletter.

Brenda

To the editor,

Having been a confused conservative, in many ways; my life has been dull. To compound this I was a homophobic closeted transsexual. Yes I wasted much too long to address my innate desire. (and I do regret not having taken this journey when I was a teenager. My life would have been more satisfying).

To be a woman is only part of my wish, I would die a happy woman if only I could give birth to another human being; yes I want to be a mother!! Nature gave me the wrong equipment but in our time of medical advances; transplantation, invitro fertilization, artificial insemination - science is at the threshold of allowing anyone to experience motherhood...

The costs would be astronomical, the procedures experimental and the moral, ethical issues huge and controversial. I am open to any input, suggestion, comment which may garner support of my dream. Is it possible?

I do not want to die as a man but as a WOMAN and it would be most satisfying to know that a person would be left in this world that at least knows me to be that person's "birth mother", without deception, but truthfully and legitimately. (Read: Birth Certificate)

The purpose of my life is to produce more like and to help keep those alive living. To take life or maim life or maim life has to be wrong as it is contrary to life's ideal. (Food is exempt). My innate sense is that no one has the right to affect others negatively, even if asked to, or, if wrong was done to them. To help one another is most proper in the positive but not for wrongs. We all have the ability to do the

right thing; few act on it. Wouldn't it be grand if everyone had the opportunity to gestate and nurse new life? what better way to equalize the sexes and end destructive differences. My hope is the future will be kinder than the world I've experienced.

P.S Was the article on the cover of Twenty Minutes the End II a Hoax?

Danielle T.

Dear Danielle,

I am not a doctor. If anyone has any information on this subject please write. I have not heard anything in this subject except rumors that: According to Omni magazine, pregnancy outside the uterus has occurred in genetic women and with a donor this may be possible in a genetic male. The article also stated that this would be very dangerous and may never be performed. I have also read elsewhere that if female reproductive organs were transplanted, the ova would be sterilized by the drugs that keep them from being rejected. I personally believe the article to be fake.

Dear Brenda,

I was pleasantly surprised to receive a copy of XX (Twenty) from Becky O., the club secretary and treasurer. I had no idea that the reins would be picked up so quickly. I was even more pleased to see that you and your staff have done such a fine job in producing an even better newsletter than the old Twenty Minutes.

Twenty Minutes was designed and conceived a little over four years ago as a means of disseminating information to club members. I had no help when I started it, but I was happy when a number of people, especially Becky O. began contributing time and energy to it. Twenty Minutes was a mid 80's style publication which eventually got embroiled in the political aspects of the gender community. Many words were written and published, and indeed, much has changed in the gender community since that time. I am confident that the new Twenty newsletter will go on to serve the Twenty Club and the transsexual Community for the 90's.

Enclosed is my cheque for \$50.00 for membership in the Twenty Club as a patron. I sincerely wish you, Anne C. Judy S. and Angie L. all the best in your future endeavors.

Perhaps Paddy and I may get down to Hartford next year for a meeting, and well get a chance to converse. Good luck.

Veronica B.

Dear Veronica,

I would say "different" before "better". Twenty Minutes was there to help and inform people for a very long time. For that, for your comments, for your donation, thank you. I look forward to meeting you.

Brenda

RESOURCES

The following area organizations are known to the editors to provide valuable support to the gender community. This does not constitute and official endorsement by XX, The XX Club or The GICNE, however you are encouraged to investigate to investigate any and all resources and judge their value to yourself. Updates and additional information are welcome.

If I may personally thank the Connecticut Self-Help Mutual Support Network for leading me to the XX Club, thank You. If anyone knows of other New England organizations such as this please let us know about them.

Brenda

AEGIS - Chrysalis Quarterly P.O Box 33724 Decatur, GA 30033
Resource Type: Publisher of a TS Newsletter

The Connecticut Self-Help Mutual Support Network 389 Whitney Avenue New Haven, CT 06511 Telephone (203) 789-7645
Resource Type: This is non-profit Ct. State organization that has knowledge of over 400 support groups of all types.

Connecticut Outreach Society P.O Box 163 Farmington, Ct 06034
Meetings: 2ND Sat & 4TH Wed in West Hartford, (203) 371-6292
Resource Type: TV & TS Support Group

Harriet Lane's TV Set P.O Box 4002 Wallingford, Ct 06492
Meetings: 2ND & 4TH Saturday Evenings 8-12PM
Resource Type: TV & TS Social Group

IFGE - TV/TS Tapestry Journal P.O Box 367 Wayland, MA 01778 Telephone (617) 894-83402
Resource Type: Umbrella organization for transgendered support groups. Publisher of a TS & TV Magazine.

J2CP Information Services - P. O. Box 184, San Caspitrano, CA 92693
Resource Type: TS Information and Referrals.

Renaissance Education Association P.O Box 552 King of Prussia, PA 19406 Telephone (215) 630-1437
Resource Types: TV & TS Support Group and Newsletter

The Transsexual Voice P.O Box 16314 Atlanta, GA 30321
Resource Type: Publisher of a TS Newsletter

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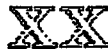
A little note of need

We are so fortunate to have the Twenty Club here in Hartford that we often forget many of the others who travel two hundred plus miles to get the badly needed support found here. I know if it hadn't been for someone else's driving there were many times I would not have been here myself.

It would be nice if a few of the "locals" could arrange a place, or accommodations so those less fortunate could rest before the long drive back. This would also give them time and fellowship badly needed to help with many of their own decisions to be made.

Presently we do share an extremely functional support group. One which anyone could be proud of. Perhaps this is boastful but, to me it doesn't look like the Twenty Club will be floundering for a long time to come. thanks,

Christine.



Love Letter to Terry

It's been a very long time since we first met and I never expected our friendship to last. First I do wish any one all the success and good fortune in the world when it comes to resolving there own gender dysphoria. If we could have one wish I'm sure mine would be to change places with this beautiful "F" to "M", of course keep in mind beauty with most of us must be beneath the skin.

We've done a lot of crazy things since first meeting three years ago. My first feelings were absolute jealousy, followed by profound respect for a person who I grew to love as I would have loved my own sister. To do a transition initially this person had to have a heck of a lot of strength and will power. In this department this guy did a great job. He looked like a Chippendale when done. I wish I was there then because with no family support, in fact the exact opposite he soon made the transition back to "F" in exact words a male in a female's body.

To have known her as only Terry and never to have met him I feel very cheated. There would have ben the support had we met a year earlier.

All the "if's, could of, might, and maybe's, in the world won't change where we are now. Her still dealing with her dysphoria and jealousy for others who have transitioned and me looking forward to a exciting new life as a new woman. These feelings I prey grow old fast and we have a lot more memories to come as the dear friends we have become because of our similarities, respect, and companionship shared with each other.

LOVE and APPRECIATION,

Laura

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(If you cannot currently afford membership - but don't wish to be without a XX Newsletter - send in the coupon with whatever you can afford - we will make sure you have our newsletter.)

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Our Guest Speaker

January 11th - XX Club Meeting

"Gender Dysphoria - A Medical Perspective"

Dr. Elliot Sternthal, M.D., F.A.C.P., will address the special medical management needs of the gender dysphoric individual at this meeting.

Dr. Sternthal is an Endocrinologist in private practice in Bloomfield, CT. Some of us know Dr. Sternthal better as a member of the board of the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, Inc. - and our clinic Endocrinologist. He is a Board Certified Endocrinologist, and a Fellow of the American College of Physicians.

This is your chance to ask all the questions that you have been dying to ask. Come with your lists. This meeting will certainly not be dull!

Our Guest Speaker

February 8th - XX Club Meeting

"Definitions, Etiology, & The Current Status of

Gender Dysphoria in Society"

Dr. Leah Shaffer, Ph.D., President of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., will be our honored guest speaker at this meeting.

In addition to her work with the Harry Benjamin Foundation, Dr. Shaffer is a Clinical Psychologist in private practice in New York City. Upon the death of Dr. Harry Benjamin, Dr. Shaffer was entrusted with the records of Dr. Benjamin's life study of gender dysphoria.

We will be honoring Dr. Shaffer for her contributions to the study of Gender Dysphoria at this meeting.

