

# CROSS-TALK

The Gender Community's News & Information Monthly

#52

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The Gender Community's News & Information Monthly

**FEBRUARY 1994  
(ISSUE #52)**



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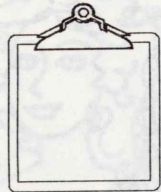
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## KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD

### AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

by Kimberleigh Richards

By now, I think most everyone is aware that last November's Tri-Ess convention -- the "Holiday En Femme" -- made history by being the first gender community event to be covered (inadvertently and unplanned) by local television news media while the event was in progress. Since that time, there has been a backlash against Tri-Ess by those who feel that the media has no place at these events.

It will come as no surprise to anyone that I believe these naysayers are wrong; that the time has come for sympathetic news coverage of our community. After all, television news is **not** tabloid-format or sensationalistic talk shows. The coverage given Tri-Ess on the three local television stations involved was factual, not exploitative. Much to everyone's surprise, the media was professional and accommodating; no one was shown on camera unless they gave their approval first, and none of the reporters made any derogatory on-air comments. (One reporter, who has worked for the local ABC-owned station for 19 years, told me that he deliberately avoided any angle that would have detracted from the seriousness of the subject.) It's also not surprising that those who feel this coverage may lead to (*gasp!*) increased coverage at other events have spread misinformation to strengthen their position. I should also point out that those who are speaking out against media coverage have no great love for Tri-Ess, and have been outspoken against the organization in the past. Personal agendas again ...

Two newsletters published the erroneous "fact" that many of the Holiday's participants ran for cover to their rooms when the television crews arrived and did not return to the event until hours later. The actual fact is that the majority of the registered participants were not even at the hotel at that time; they were away on a tour!

Another newsletter hinted that a member of the "Holiday En Femme" committee "leaked" the location to the media. What actually happened is that a story arranged with the *Los Angeles Times* to be published in Sunday's editions -- after the event -- was instead published in Friday's edition. Once the television stations' assignment editors read about the convention, it certainly didn't take much more than a phone call to the Burbank police department before they learned where we were. (I presume we'll now hear cries of "stop giving newspaper interviews" next.)

It has been suggested that the appropriate response, once

the television crews arrived, would have been to say "sorry, you can't stay". (In fact, the organizing committees of both the "Texas 'T' Party" and "California Dreamin'" have already made public statements indicating that this is precisely how they would handle the media if they showed up at their events.) Do those who advocate this "slam the door in their faces" policy have **any** idea what the result of such a response would be? Let me tell you. The information that the convention was being held would still undoubtedly be reported, but the denial of access to the cameras would create a prejudicial opinion in most viewers' minds that what was going on was somehow kinky, perverted ... or any derogatory adjective of your choice.

My point is that allowing the media access -- under specific restrictions -- to our events will allow us to make significant progress toward educating the outside world that we are not abnormal or weirdos. I know it's not a scientific survey, but in the days following my appearance on local television (and CNN) as the Holiday's official spokesperson, several of the local transit system drivers (remember me, the one who rides MTA buses all over L.A.?) mentioned that they had seen me and said they had really learned something about crossdressers. This was **positive** publicity for our community ... a fact underscored by the numerous inquiries fielded by Tri-Ess board chairman Jane Ellen Fairfax from people who saw the convention and decided to risk showing up at the hotel to find others like themselves. Can anyone honestly say that this was **negative** publicity?

Further, not one person came to the hotel intending to do the eventgoers harm. **Not one negative incident.**

The keys to making the media work for us are the "specific restrictions" I mentioned above. When the television crews arrived in Burbank, they were told, in no uncertain terms, that no one could be shown on camera unless they gave their permission in advance. The media's reaction was "we'll live with that provided you give us an official on-camera spokesperson". Since I was both the ranking member of the committee on the premises at that point **and** had nothing to lose by being public, I volunteered myself. Once the reporters had their official spokesperson, **they didn't care what other restrictions were placed on them.** As I said at the outset, they behaved themselves, and no one's security was compromised. (*continued, page 9*)



## The NewsQueen

Edited by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Bad news, gentle readers -- Ms. Sinclair is unable to lift your February doldrums or cure the cabin fever so prevalent this time of year. Alas, she has no new antics to report from RuPaul, nor no scandal involving crossdressing. Instead, we just have matter-of-fact events.

What could be more matter of fact than legal matters? And so that is where we shall begin.

A federal district judge in Philadelphia has ruled that transsexuals are not covered by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and therefore cannot bring discrimination suits against employers.

Judge Herbert Hutton recently threw out the discrimination suit filed by Andria Adams Dobre against Amtrak by deciding that the term "sex" in the anti-discrimination law is not the same as "gender." And so the mean-spirited treatment Dobre suffered at the Philadelphia Amtrak office when she began living as a woman was not because she was a woman, but because she was a man becoming a woman. In other words, sex is a protected category; gender-role is not.

Hutton also threw out Dobre's claim of protection under the disability provision of Pennsylvania's Human Relations Act by ruling that transsexualism is neither a physical nor mental impairment because it does not "limit major life activities." Dobre herself had argued that being transsexual "in no way interfered with her abilities to perform ... as an employee of Amtrak."

Her attorney, Hyman Lovitz, will take the case to the federal Circuit Court of Appeals. He recognizes that he is fighting an uphill battle, but he is hopeful of making new law.

On the other side of Pennsylvania, another transsexual filed a federal discrimination suit on the other side of the issue, so to speak. Taylor Brooks claims that USX Corp., the nation's largest steelmaker, discriminates against him because he was born female and is living as a man.

Brooks, 35, began dressing as a man when she was 18 and began taking male hormones in 1987. He plans to have a sex change in a few years.

Transsexuals are faring no better in Washington State prisons, where the secretary of the Department of Corrections has decided against revising the policy for treating transsexual inmates.

The department was considering revising its policies so they would more closely correspond to the standard medical practices. For example, state officials were going to scrap some of the criteria they used to determine if an inmate is transsexual. Under the current prison policy, no

inmate can be treated for transsexualism unless they were in long-term care prior to entering prison, already had some surgery, and established an escrow account to pay for their sex change. In addition, the individual can never have had children.

Ava King, a transsexual activist, accused officials of corrections with "playing God with all the transsexuals in the Department of Corrections."

As if the discrimination against transsexuals isn't enough, now comes word of a health threat.

Dr. Simon Rosser of the University of Minnesota Program in Human Sexuality says that transsexuals who share needles to inject hormones face as much of a risk of being infected with AIDS as do drug addicts who share needles. Yet, Rosser, says, most AIDS educators are not aware that the needle sharing exists among people other than drug addicts. A risk also exists among transsexuals receiving back-alley silicone injections.

"People receiving hormones and implants under supervised medical care are fine," Rosser said. "But because of the difficulty transgendered people have in getting health care and insurance, there's a black market for hormones."

Rosser and a colleague discovered the hormone needle sharing while conducting a pioneering study of AIDS risk factors among transsexuals. He said that more research was needed.

But activists in Seattle are not sitting back and letting bad stuff happen any more; they are organizing against one primary target, the right wing. Several transgendered organizations met recently to discuss how they can mobilize to counter political and religious conservatives.

"The various groups with the gender community are now under attack as symbols of queerness by the right wing, just as these same groups have been attacked by bigots from the Inquisition to the police at Stonewall," said activist ben e factory.

Judy Osborne, the president of Emerald City, has been working to mobilize members of the area's community by writing and speaking on the urgent need to fight right wing attacks. Specifically, she has been informing people about the threats involved with the anti-gay voter initiatives passed in Colorado (later overturned by the courts) and defeated in Oregon. She said she is frightened by the complacency she sees. "Many people believe that it

can't happen here,' yet the religious right has targeted 14 states for anti-gay initiatives in 1994," she said.

As another example of how homosexual and transgendered people are uniting came when the secretariat of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) voted to seek the addition of equal rights for transgendered persons to the platform of this year's Stonewall 25 March on the United Nations.

This is the 25th anniversary year of the Stonewall Riots when the modern gay rights movement was born out of the resistance of 13 New York drag queens to police oppression outside the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village.

The recommendation by the secretariat must be approved by the ILGA World Conference.

While drag queens can do admirable and important things, they can also do some pretty weird stuff, like hide dead bodies in trunks for 15 years.

Two months after Dorian Corey, one of the stars of *Paris Is Burning*, died of AIDS, friends were going through her extensive wardrobe in her Harlem apartment when they came across a startling discovery. Inside a heavy trunk was a man's body, tucked in a fetal position, and wrapped in imitation leather.

Police could easily determine that the man was killed by a gunshot to the back of the head, but because of the mummified state of the corpse, a special solution was needed to soften the skin so fingerprints could be taken.

Investigators eventually learned that the man was Robert Wells. Other tests and evidence in the trunk showed that Wells was killed about 15 years ago. Police found no evidence as to who pulled the trigger or why Corey kept the body.

But a rumor among the queens in the neighborhood claims that Corey killed Wells in self-defense during a break-in. There supposedly was a note in Corey's own hand telling the story. But police say no such note was found.

"This only makes her more legendary," Chi Chi Valenti, the producer of a drag club where Corey performed, said of the star.

Howard Rollins, the actor who played Virgil Tibbs on the television drama *In the Heat of the Night*, was well on his way to becoming a legend among the folks Conyers, Ga. because of the outfits he wore around town.

Customers at the Turtles music and video store were shocked to see Rollins shopping for CDs while wearing a long, black gauze see-through outfit over a pair of black bikini briefs. He was spotted at a local yogurt bar wearing a leopard-skin leotard, cowboy boots and a long, black curly wig. He wore the wig again -- this time with gray leggings and a black and white blouse -- for an outing to the A&P seafood counter. When police stopped him on suspicion of drunken driving, he was wearing a blonde wig, glitter eye shadow, a blue tank top and white culottes. "He wasn't at all pretty," the officer said.

But in some locales, his attire wasn't so strange. A customer at a gay bar in Atlanta said he often saw Rollins wearing leather miniskirts, spike heels, and falsies. "He wasn't being particularly flamboyant," the man said. "He was just blending in with the crowd."

Rollins has been arrested three time for drunk driving and faces some serious jail time in Georgia. But another man whose interest in women's clothes got him arrested for shoplifting has landed a lucrative consulting job with the Pentagon.

Former Acting Secretary of the Army John W. Shannon received a month-to-month contract to study Defense Department supply procedures. The contract pays \$7,100 per month.

Last August, Shannon was arrested at the post exchange at Fort Myer, Va. after store detectives saw him put a woman's skirt and blouse into a shopping bag and leave the store without paying. Because it was his first offense, he was enrolled in a shoplifting prevention program and agreed to perform 50 hours of community service.

The decision to give the consulting contract to Shannon was made by an old Army buddy who is now a deputy undersecretary of defense. While the contract was defended on the record, some officials privately said it

looked odd.

The simple outfit that Shannon shoplifted seems to fit into the newest trend in New York. Long a feature of major designers shows, the flamboyant drag queen is becoming androgynous.

After seasons of wearing bouffant wigs and heavy makeup while strolling down the runways, Billy Beyond made an appearance at Todd Oldham's show sans wig and just the lightest touch of makeup.

"This was the first time Billy was out on the runway as Billy in the same way that Cindy or Linda were on the runway," Oldham said.

"Drag has always been a comment on the predominant gender roles and the image of women," Michael Goff, editor and president of *Out* magazine said. "What you're seeing with the stripped-down drag model is mirroring the mood you're seeing from stripped-down woman's models. Men are coming right behind it, changing from steroid boy bodies to fawn boys."

Speaking of the shows that put models who were obviously boys in everything from baby-doll dresses, to long gowns, Goff said, "The message is 'More clothing options for men, please'."

Exploring those options has been an educational experience for Johnny Depp. He spent months teetering around in high heels in preparation for his role as Ed Wood, the B-movie director of the 1950's who was also a transvestite.

"There is something fun and sort of exciting about doing something that shocks people, and (a man) wearing women's clothing makes people really uncomfortable," Depp said.

The biography on Wood -- entitled *Ed Wood* -- was directed by Tim Burton and will be released this year by -- of all studios -- Disney.

In December, we asked about a new film called *Just Like A Woman*. We have since learned that it is a British movie about actual transvestism that is in release overseas.

The film is based on the autobiographical book *Geraldine* by Monica Jay about her affair with a crossdressing roommate. Adrian Pasdar stars as the transvestite and Julie Walters (of *Educating Rita* and *Stepping Out*) plays the woman.

"I liked the fact that (the film) dealt with the issues in a realistic, humane way -- not cheap laughs," Walters said.

"I think it's always been there," she said of crossdressing. "It's just coming out more. We used to be ashamed of

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anything sexual that was different. Now people are going into therapy, learning it's healthy not to bottle up. As Liza Minnelli (her co-star in *Stepping Out*) said to me; you're only as sick as your secrets."

"I think men are floundering in their roles in the 90's. They've never been allowed to be as open as we are -- their clothes are very rigid. Women are free to dress in (men's) suits. In some way, it's seen as enhancing their femininity."

But not everyone in the British Isles are as tolerant of crossdressing.


Government officials had threatened to block the December start-up of an "all-transvestite channel" beamed via satellite from Germany. A spokesperson said the voyeur audience was expected to be at least 10 times the transvestite audience.

But of course, the Disney studio's foray into drag follows in the tradition established by Warner Bros.' Looney Tunes. Remember all those times when Bugs Bunny dressed as a female?

The Nuart theater in Los Angeles recently put together a program of all the classic cartoons that featured that crazy wabbit in drag. The roles included a bobby soxer, a Southern belle, an opera diva, a flamenco dancer, and more. The producers of the program wanted to call it "Bugs Bunny In Drag," but concern over offending the studio prompted the more mundane title of "Bugs Bunny Dresses Funny." Warner Bros. also nixed the idea of a drawing of Bugs as Carmen Miranda in publicity for the program.

When not watching "Nick At Night" Bugs Bunny cartoons, Ms. Sinclair is pouring through newspapers for items about crossdressing. You can help her in this important work by sending clippings -- noting the name and date of publication -- to her in care of Cross-Talk. Contributions for her cable bill will also be appreciated.

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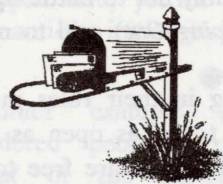
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# VOX POPULI

## Reader letters

**Re: Editorials and articles on the Benjamin Standards of Care (August, October, November, December 1993, January 1994):** In Canada the real-life test will soon be coming under a number of legal challenges. Two cases (that I know of) are already on file and a third (my own) is soon to be filed. The premise of these Human Rights complaints is three fold:

The primary allegation is that the Real Life Test is a rite of passage, representing little more than an obstacle placed in the path of true transsexuals. As such it is causative of an unequal access to medical services. Where the bulk of elective surgeries are handled solely upon the premise of "Informed Consent", sex change (and only sex change) is handled in an aura of sensationalism and opposition.

Second, the real life test does not meet the standards for special programs. In Canada, these programs (sometimes called Affirmative Action) must provide a specific benefit, relieve financial hardship, or eliminate discrimination. The RLT does none of these things. There is evidence to suggest that while only one in seven of those approaching one of Canada's gender clinics actually proceed to surgery, six of seven suffer job losses and/or social ostracisms as a direct result of their participation in the programs; there can be no doubt that the RLT has detrimental, indirect effects that far outreach its direct influence.

Finally, there is the matter of freedom of choice. Almost all elective medical procedures are performed upon the patient's say so. In no case, other than sex change, is an adult patient required to either wait a protracted amount of time, or to acquire third party permission to undergo a procedure.

In recent months there have been a flood of new publications talking about the innate differences between men and women. These documents are re-introducing our society to the concept of gender identity, and many point out that gender identity is built in, and immutable. I agree, we do not choose or learn our identities, for if that were the case transgender identity would have been trained out of our society a long time ago. The plain fact is that we are as we are in spite of society's most earnest efforts. Gender identity is no less absolute than dexterity or race and should therefore be seen as an immutable feature of the human being that, once acknowledged, is just as undeniable as left-handedness or dark brown skin.

In the end the Benjamin Standards resolve to one simple

question: "Does the psychiatric profession have the right to interfere with the freedoms of an entire group of people solely on premise of moral judgment?"

The only acceptable answer is "NO".

As much as I dislike the RLT, I also fear the results of sex change surgery on demand. We need a middle of the road solution that is both respecting of the transsexed person's rights and reassuring to the medical profession. "Extended Informed Consent" offers a good compromise. In this plan a psychiatric assessment would be made a usual step in obtaining informed consent for sex-change requests. This would be both respecting and helpful so long as the assessment confined itself to determining if the patient fully understands the gravity of their request, and judges only their ability to provide informed consent. We have the right to live as we see fit, and to begin assessing if a person is a transsexual or not crosses the line between assessment and attempting to limit our equitable access to the surgery. If we are judged capable of informed consent, the surgery must be made available to us.

I agree that waiting until one is absolutely sure about sex-change is a valid and important thing to do. However; when made into a structured rite of passage it loses its value as a precaution and becomes an infraction of our rights.

Laura Masters  
St. Catherines, ON, Canada

I believe that the Benjamin Standards should be public knowledge, for they are beneficial to the individual as well as the health care professional.

As Dallas Denny pointed out, the standards were put into place because of the need to create a safe clinical environment for the transsexual client and the health care provider. As a health care professional, I can attest to the multitude of problems one can encounter while dealing with the health care system.

I would like to point out that under any plan of care, the client must receive a full explanation of the plan in a language they can understand. Under the Client Bill of Rights (which every health care professional must adhere to), it is the physician's responsibility to make the Benjamin Standards available to the client. An informed consumer is a smart consumer, no matter if the product is a major appliance or medical treatment.

In the past, much concern has been focused on the imaginary horde of individuals ruining their lives by

faking their way through the system to obtain "easy and rapid" access to SRS. This simply is not true. As many of us know, only about 10% of those who enter treatment under the Benjamin Standards continue treatment to SRS. There are many obstacles, both written and unwritten. The hardships and expenses encountered during the course of treatment are immense, and 90% of those who begin treatment find that they do not need SRS to feel comfortable and happy with themselves.

Lori Norman  
Canoga Park, CA

"Should The Lawyers Write the TS Standards?" you asked in bold type on the December 1993 cover. My answer is no! But, neither should the doctors!

The people who should be writing the TS standards are the TS people. Your commentary convey a grave misconception that the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP) is for lawyers only. Wrong! Very, very wrong!

Both the first conference, in 1992, and the second, last year, were attended by more non-attorneys than attorneys, as was the workshop that gave input to the Health Law Project's "Standards of Care". The application of the law to transgender issues is not the sole property of the lawyers. I did not create ICTLEP for a lawyer-only purpose; I created it to empower the gender community -- lawyers and non-lawyers -- to begin *itself* to write and develop its own legal definitions, policies and strategies.

The Benjamin Standards were and continue to be formulated by doctors only. The ICTLEP Standards of Care are *our*standards ... formulated by us, not perfect but a good start. Anyone who doesn't like them should be at the 1994 conference this summer in Houston.

Phyllis Randolph Frye  
Executive Director, ICTLEP  
Houston, TX

**Re: "National Publication Review" (October 1993):** I read *Transformation* magazine recently, and found the display of male genitalia to be very offensive, "dirtying up" a potentially good magazine.

Vanessa M.  
Chicago, IL

I ordered a magazine from *Spartacus* last spring, which was put on back order until I wrote in July to inquire and

finally received -- in October -- a copy of a magazine I had already received from them. I returned it, indicating it was a duplicate and ordering two more magazines at the same time, and nothing has been heard from them, not even a letter.

Heather L. Smith  
Oakland, CA

**Editor's Reply:** The two above letters are a sampling of the mail we received after publishing a negative review of *Spartacus'* magazine *Transformation*. We have yet to receive any letters in their defense.

The third issue of the magazine came out just before our deadline, and its publisher -- once again -- made statements that his intent is to "improve the image of crossdressing among the public". Yet the magazine still contains sexually explicit artwork, including graphic displays of penile restraints.

The publisher has asked his readers to help convince mom-and-pop grocery stores, liquor stores, and newsstands to carry the magazine. I wonder how many of those sales outlets would reconsider a decision to carry it after they saw a typical issue. -- KMR

**Re: "My Life As A Transgenderist" (July 1993, recently reprinted in *Tapestry* #66):** I recall that both Virginia Prince and Ann Bolin said that TSs seem to go through some form of adult adolescence and then grow up as women. I'd like to hope that we, as a group, are finally growing up, but I am not sure if this is the case or if we are just splintering into factions between those who are serious about their womanhood; those, like my DQ friend Kelly, for whom the whole point is female **impersonation**; and those who will never even wish to get beyond "isn't this dress sexy?".

A related issue is how we can nurture a core of effective leadership in the community if our best and most experienced inevitably mature in a way that takes them out of the community. So many post-ops choose to leave the gender community entirely to pursue their lives as women, taking their wealth of experience and insight with them.

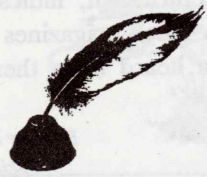
Your article makes me understand why, but I still mourn what we are losing.

Wendy Smith  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Your letters to the editor are encouraged, and may now be sent to us via Internet e-mail to [kymmer@xconn.com](mailto:kymmer@xconn.com).**

Internet is accessible via CompuServe, America OnLine, Prodigy, GEnie, Delphi, FidoNet-affiliated BBS systems, Internet-affiliated BBS systems, and various educational and governmental Internet-affiliated systems. See page 9 for instructions on sending Internet e-mail.

You can also fax us at (818) 347-4190, or write us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365.



OH, GROW UP!

by Anne Blackwood

I've been reading "Vox Populi" in last month's issue (yes, I too read Cross-Talk) while my nails are drying. I am quite disturbed by Dawn Linden's letter.

To begin with, anyone involved in substance abuse (alcoholism, drug addiction) is de facto incompetent to make good life decisions, their behavior is the clearest evidence to that fact. A friend of mine, a former substance abuser in her younger days, who had at one time aspired to be a veterinarian (and I think has the intelligence to be one) and now works as an assistant in a pharmacy (how she managed that with her history is a real question, but I trust her absolutely) and has at times had to work two or three jobs to make ends meet, had to sit her then teen aged son down and teach him this very lesson, when he began experimenting with drugs. If not for her own drug abuse in high school, she may well have become a veterinarian instead of a pharmacist's assistant. The fact that one chooses to avoid a problem via substance abuse rather than deal with it constructively throws that person's judgement into question.

The reality is that no qualified surgeon is going to perform SRS on someone who is clearly a substance abuser, if for no other reason than s/he would be liable for malpractice. If your life is f---ed up before SRS it's going to be f---ed up after SRS, it is not a panacea. People who get into substance abuse rarely accept responsibility for their own lives, it's always some one or some thing else that is to blame. When their lives don't improve after SRS, of course it's the surgeon's fault or the therapist's fault.

I really think that Ms. Linden is doing transsexuals a disservice by promoting the notion that therapists are using the standards of care to promote business. If a transsexual enters into a therapist office with the idea that she is just another obstacle to overcome, no therapy will take place. The most fundamental tenet of therapy is that the relationship between the therapist and client is based on honesty, that the client is speaking the truth. The therapist must assume that their client is telling them the truth about what they think and feel. If one enters a therapist's office and fabricates a story based on a 'profile', the onus is on the patient when no therapy has taken place.

Next, therapists do not control the process, they only monitor it. If your therapist is trying to control your transition, get yourself a new therapist, fast. Yes, there

are bad therapists. There are good therapists with whom you may not work well. To borrow Dawn's pantyhose analogy, if the hose don't fit well, and you continue to buy the same brand, you're an idiot. Shop around until you find a therapist you like. I did.

The notion that society is somehow to blame for the emotional distress of the transgendered is not without merit, but there are many places in this world where our lifestyles are tolerated or accepted, and if you don't live in one of those places and your life is at stake, **move!** I live in Los Angeles. I used to live in suburban Northern California and was born in Michigan. The only barrier I have to making a full transition is not what (*sharp inhale*) society thinks. It's not what my friends or family think (they already know). What's stopping me? Excess facial hair. You can't do electrolysis without letting it grow. In fact, I find that when I present myself as a woman people respond much more positively to me than I do when I am obliged to present myself as a man.

What **used** to stop me was the male persona I had created to get by with in society. The character that I created to live up to society's expectation of a boy/man, prevented me from being myself. That character had a life of its own and did not want to give it up. For me to live that character had to cease to exist. It has. Now society adjusts to me, and I think it likes me better now.

But I digress. Ms. Linden's assertion regarding the therapist's involvement, "... becomes an industry for them and delivers them a living as well. A restrictive approach ... enhances demand for their services ..." is insulting at best. Among my friends I count a number of therapists, licensed clinical psychologists and MFCCs. We all must make a living, but my friends were not motivated to go into psychology by money. These people are all curious about the human condition, and they desire to help people. If your therapist is motivated by money, cancel your appointments and find a new therapist. **That is your responsibility.**

Recently I thought I was going to be approved for hormone therapy, I had been pushing for it, and saw no reason why I would not get that approval. When it was not forthcoming I was very angry and hurt, and could not see how my therapist and her colleagues could not see my point of view. Did I leave my therapist? No. On reflection I realized that they were only doing the job I hired them to do. I hired them to (continued, next page)

KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD ... continued from pg. 2

The time has come for us to stop being suspicious of the media ... to stop presuming that the 11:00 news is the same as Geraldo. Let us learn from this experience and begin to work with the media for more such positive coverage of our community. We have already proven that we can turn a potentially catastrophic situation to our advantage. How much can we accomplish if we plan for it in advance?

**DO YOU HAVE A COMMENT OF YOUR OWN?** "Vox Populi" is the gender community's "town square" for the exchange of opinions and ideas. If you have a response to any editorial, news item, or article appearing in **Cross-Talk**, please feel free to contribute. We suggest keeping letters to 400 words; one page typewritten or 2000 characters ASCII. **Cross-Talk** reserves the right to publish only those portions of a letter specifically addressing the issue. Personal attacks will not be published.

You may write us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365; fax us at (818) 347-4190; or send e-mail to *Kymmer* via Cross Connection, (818) 841-8887, or to *kymmer@xconn.com* via Internet. (CompuServe, America OnLine, Prodigy, GENie, and Delphi users: Follow your service's instructions to send Internet e-mail. FidoNet users: Send e-mail to 1:1/31, addressed to UUCP, and write *To: kymmer@xconn.com* as the first line of your message. If you are using any other Internet-affiliated system, ask your system operator for instructions.) We also accept ASCII files on disk at the above mailing address.

**COGITO ERGO FEM ... continued**

verify my own judgement. I hired them to be an objective outside observer, to make sure that I was not deluding myself. And to help me work out some kinks that had been bothering me.

The notion that all one needs is a sounding board, but that somehow a therapist isn't it makes little sense to me. I think Dawn was implying that all one needs is a friend to listen. The problem with friends is that they are not objective. Friends have ulterior motives, which may simply be that they want their friendship reciprocated, and so they tell you what you want to hear, not what you need to hear. In the transgendered communities this is even more distorted by mutual reinforcement. "I'll tell you how feminine you are if you tell me how feminine I am." The distortions can be staggering. I personally don't trust people who tell me what I want to hear. "What's their motive?" I ask myself.

Dawn is correct in stating that the cause of transsexuality is irrelevant (but, I think interesting). I am not sure whether or not she feels that transsexuality is a dysfunction. I do not, it is an anomaly, I suppose, but I think that the same forces that drive evolution created

transsexualism, or as she says, "Transsexualism is one manifestation of biodiversity." Not all societies seek to regiment all individuals, nor do all individuals allow that individuality to be stripped from them.

I am a woman. Is my gender in question? No. I am a woman. I have the wrong reproductive system. That's it. Is society to blame for my problems? No, and believe me, I've had more than my share. What becomes of my life is up to me, I am responsible. Those substance abusers have not taken responsibility for their lives, and until they do they will continue to be miserable. They are not genuine victims, but would like you to treat them as such as it relieves them of the responsibility of their lives.

If you are not mature enough to accept the responsibility of your own life you are not mature enough to be asking a professional to permanently alter your body. Even if it is the right thing to do, you cannot seriously expect a surgeon, who has made huge personal sacrifices to become one, to risk their livelihood, their reputation, or anything else, to perform SRS. You must do everything in your power to make your life work first. You must take the responsibility to turn your life around. And by the way, it is those very people, the irresponsible ones, who create the negative opinions that some professionals may have about us.

I feel good about myself, as a consequence I leave a positive impression where ever I go. I don't know if people think I'm transsexual or a transvestite, or what, but I leave a positive impression. It should be no surprise then, that I resent those who leave a negative impression. For the record, I am nearly six feet tall and am a bass. Even if I had been born with a vagina, people would wonder, but it is my attitude that makes it irrelevant.

It is all right for children to be children and behave as children. It is not all right for adults, regardless of the gender or sexual orientation, to behave as children. If you behave as a child, don't be surprised when the world treats you as one.

[Anne Blackwood may be contacted at P.O. Box 1251, Beverly Hills CA 90213.]

**CROSS-TALK** is looking for retail outlets interested in selling this magazine every month. We are especially interested in gender community boutiques, alternative press bookstores, and other businesses catering to crossdressers and transsexuals. Please call us at (818) 776-8503, fax us at (818) 347-4190, or write P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365 for a current list of our wholesale distributors or to arrange for monthly shipments directly from us.



## VIRGIN VIEWS BY VIRGINIA

# DRAG QUEENS AND MALE BONDING

by Virginia Prince

I recently met the man who publishes the magazine called *Dragazine*. He is a drag queen himself and the magazine is largely about the field of gay crossdressers. Of course, I have known about drag queens for years just as we all have but I never had an occasion to examine the phenomenon up close as it were. I had seen a couple of copies of *Dragazine* and found them well written and the editorials well thought out so I thought it might be educational to meet the editor/publisher. By inquiries around the book stores that I sell to I found his name and address. I called him and had a short conversation over the phone, the upshot of which was that we decided to meet for brunch one Sunday a couple of months ago. We met at one of these cafeteria style eat-all-you-want places which had an outside eating area on Wilshire Blvd., right across the street from the La Brea Tar Pits Museum of pre history. That's where they have dug up all the bones of mammoths, sabertooth cats, etc.

This seemed an appropriate place for a couple of old cats like Fred and Virginia to meet. We got acquainted, got our first load of food and retired to an out of the way place on the outside patio. The food was good and so was the conversation. I started out asking him a lot of questions about Drag Queens, their thoughts, feelings, motivations, etc. He, in turn, asked me about TVs and we compared notes about the two groups. We had such a fascinating couple of hours that we both wanted to do it again which we did a couple of weeks later. Round three has not come up yet but it will shortly. I found Fred a fascinating person and apparently he found me to his liking too so we became friends as well as writers and investigators of the human sex/gender scene. He taped our conversation and edited it into an article on me for his magazine. For any of you who may be homophobic and wonder that because I have had several long talks with an avowed homosexual crossdresser if I am in some way slipping from my lifelong position of being an avowed and openly admitted heterosexual, the answer is: No way! But above and beyond that I also admit to being a curious intellectual and I want to know a lot more about a lot of things than I do now so I read and talk to people who can add to my knowledge.

Unfortunately too many people generate biases and

prejudices and then stick with them, making no attempt to validate them through experience or serious interactions with others. I wanted to know more about gays who crossdress, so I sought out someone who would be able to enlighten me and he did. We talked of many things and exchanged ideas. He was very interested in my ideas and concepts about gender and I, in turn, found much of interest in his views. It was one of these bits of wisdom that I found so fascinating that I decided to share it with others in our community. I was asking Fred questions about dressing -- when, where, how etc. We in the TV world (I use TV here rather than CD because both types of people do crossdress and it would be confusing) have our organizational meetings (if we belong to such a group) and we dress up and go there if that is practical, or bring our "gear" and dress in a special room at the location of the meeting. Gays, on the other hand, don't have groups such as we do, they have "drag parties" generally at someone's house. The guests usually do not dress at home and go to the party but prefer to all get dressed there, and all in the same room. This was an interesting difference between the two groups. I told Fred that our people would prefer to dress beforehand and arrive at the meeting or party already as "girls". Non-accepting wives or the impracticability of escaping from one's apartment without being seen and recognized or other reasons might make it necessary to dress at the meeting or party location. I indicated that TVs would prefer to dress alone and then appear. He countered that queens enjoyed getting dressed in a group -- more or less all together. This was such an interesting difference that I inquired into it.

Fred made the comment that such dressing together was a form of "male bonding". At first this sounded sort of ridiculous -- a bunch of guys getting together to put on dresses, heels, lipstick, etc. seemed about the last place or situation that would tie one male to another in a "bond". But as we kicked the idea around and examined it I asked myself "just what is the glue that brings about male bonding?" I suppose psychologists and sociologists would come up with a variety of answers, but I immediately found one of my own! When a situation, voluntary or involuntary, involves several men together and in which

there is an element of risk or possible danger -- and therefore requires courage -- occurs, the men involved will become bonded to each other. A sharing like this will do it. I expect that many of you reading this essay can hark back to some such event in your earlier years.

Sure, you say, but what has that got to do with dressing? At first glance, nothing, and that was my reaction to Fred's assertion that male bonding took place when a bunch of guys got together in the same room to put on their dresses, heels, wigs, etc. But after I had formulated the idea of risk and courage it immediately became clear. For a man in this culture, which is so imbued with the John Wayne idea of machismo, to do anything intentionally that smacks of femininity is truly a serious risk and requires real courage. But those who do it, while aware of the risks do not think of it as a matter of courage. The desire and the satisfaction of the act completely outweigh the awareness of risk.

Take the classic first outside experience that probably

many of you went through. A boy or young man who has found the pleasures of crossdressing decides to venture outside. He is scared and apprehensive so he resolves to do it when no one can see him. So about 11:30 at night he goes out and walks to the corner "to mail a letter." This is a heady experience and even though he is frightened he is also thrilled. It never occurs to him that the risk of being a "lady" alone on a dark street at midnight is about as risky as it gets. Not only do single women get attacked but even a police prowler car cruising along checking out the neighborhood seeing a woman alone is almost certain to pull up to her and ask if she is in trouble, is there something they can do for her, etc. They admonish her about being out alone at night. Then if he feels the necessity to reply he does it in either a regular masculine voice or in a fake cracked falsetto. Either way the police latch on to him immediately. On the other hand, if he ventured out to a large mall at noon on a Saturday with hundreds of people around he would probably be safer unless his getup is so ridiculous that people cannot help but notice him for one reason or another. Generally, mall crowds are intent on their own business and haven't much time for checking out others. On top of that the real females in the mall are generally dressed in such sloppy and unfeminine outfits that a sloppy TV would fit right in with them.

Has it ever occurred to you to evaluate the courage it took you and others to decide on a feminine name? Imagine a normal boy selecting the name Betty, Barbara or Sally! Such names are so infused with femininity that to be willing to accept such a name not only to yourself but from others is a real act of courage and dedication, though it is seldom thought of as such. But there is bonding here too. You can see it at one of our conventions when two or more TVs get together, give each other a kiss or a hug, call each other by their selected girl's names while both are dressed as girls/women. Both of them are taking risks and the awareness of these joint risks provide a comradeship, sisterhood or bond of "we are both in this together". So the idea of male bonding between gay male drag queens is very understandable, even though it seemed ridiculous when first mentioned by Fred. The motivations and satisfactions gained from crossdressing by queens and straight TVs may be different, but the social risks are common to both and the awareness that there are others who share the same feelings is indeed a bond-making experience.

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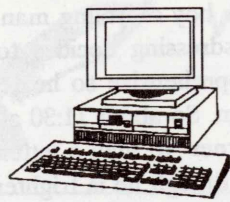
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**EFFECTIVE WITH THIS MONTH'S ISSUE**, we will no longer be publishing our "Reader Profiles" section. This is due to a high number of subscriber requests for profile removal or for address deletion. The need for this decision was hastened by a recent removal request that was made "because of numerous profane, vulgar, and sexually explicit letters" received by the subscriber. We had hoped, when we introduced this feature a year ago, that we would be able to set ourselves apart from the "contact" magazine listings by careful editing and the lack of photos. Apparently there are some individuals reading *Cross-Talk* who don't recognize the difference between sleazy and classy. Thus we find it necessary to remove ourselves from those individuals' sources of potential correspondents. -- KMR

**If you bought this copy of Cross-Talk at a retail outlet, you can now save at least 40% off the cover price by subscribing! See page 40.**



## "Cross-Talk" Newswire

News of the worldwide gender community

The organizers of this spring's "DREAM of a Reunion" have announced that over 75 former DREAM participants have been contacted regarding the reunion event, scheduled during next month's IFGE convention in Portland, Ore.

Reunion co-chair and producer Jennifer Richards said that attendees will honor the original DREAM organizers and awardees and share memorabilia during a memorial banquet Thursday, March 17. Richards said photographs of the first DREAM, thought to be lost, have been unearthed and will be a major part of the banquet. Historic materials and collected photos will be donate to IFGE's historical library after the reunion, Richards said.

Many of the former participants of the DREAM event, which was held annually from 1972 until 1983, include many who are now leaders in the gender community.

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A 900-number service provider has unsuccessfully attempted to circumvent Tri-Ess' prohibition on commercial mailings through the organization's mail forwarding service.

Tri-Ess Director of Chapter Development Marlene L., who also operates the mail forwarding service out of the Tulare, Calif. office, intercepted a mailing from Awakening Research Group of Pleasant Group, Utah, and forwarded the contents of one envelope to Cross-Talk. The mailing consisted of a business card asking "Do You Ever Wear Clothing Belonging To The Opposite Sex?" and promising revealing information by calling a 900-number at \$3.00 per minute. The card was attached to a page from a memo pad, on which was written "(name), I thought you might be interested in this.

A phone call to the organization's listed number reached only a voice mailbox, and repeated calls by Cross-Talk were not returned. Marlene indicated that she became suspicious because of the lack of a return address on the envelope containing the intended remails and that none of the sales pitches were forwarded. She had no theories as to how Awakening Research Group acquired a membership directory to obtain members' code numbers.

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The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS) has announced the official formation of a national transgender library and archive, to be initially housed at AEGIS headquarters in Atlanta, Ga. AEGIS executive director Dallas Denny has placed her extensive personal collection of indefinite loan to the

library to begin the process of acquiring transgender-related material. "My personal materials provide a core of hundreds of books and journal articles on which to build," Denny said, adding that the organization has established an acquisition fund to obtain copies of materials with historical importance.

Denny hopes that those with books, articles, journals, magazines, newspaper clippings, videotapes and films about crossdressing, transgenderism and transsexualism will donate them to the archive, which will eventually be transferred to a separate walk-in center where interested parties may review it. She says that transferring the collection to a university library for housing is also being considered.

Library holdings will be catalogued for easy retrieval, using a bibliography of gender dysphoria which Denny has spent the past three years compiling as a basis.

Donations may be made to AEGIS at P.O. Box 33724, Decatur GA 30033. Denny suggests calling the organization at (404) 939-0244 regarding specific needs.

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The Greater New York Gender Alliance has announced dates for the second "Moonlight In Manhattan" weekend, which includes a Saturday night dinner and dance at one of New York City's fine hotels.

April 21 through 24 has been selected by event organizers, and a tentative program has also been set, including a visit to a comedy club, night bus tour, entertainment by the Imperial Court of New York, a fashion show luncheon, and seminars by Mariette Pathy Allen and Jim Bridges.

Lynda Frank of the Tri-Ess Chi Delta Mu chapter, one of the Alliance organizations, is acting as registrar for the event. She may be contacted at 330 W. 45th St. #3H, New York 10036.

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**PHILIP SALEM WATCH:** Since my editorial appeared last month on the reemergence of Philip Salem, thought by many -- including myself -- to be the most unscrupulous con man in our community's history, we have received two more stories that pre-date my encounters with him.

The first came from Cross-Talk cartoonist Karen Ann Michaels, who saw the editorial while we were stuffing envelopes at her house. She dug out a letter that she received from "Ira Gruber, Travel Editor, *Northwest Passage*" in the summer of 1984, in response to her

inquiry about an ad that appeared in a local weekly newspaper for a casting agency seeking crossdressers.

The letter, while acknowledging the publicity photo Karen sent, ignored the original reason for her inquiry, instead promoting a "U.S. Transvestite-Transsexual Contact Service" (sound familiar?) and asking "if you would go out with men on dates who would be attracted to you". The letter immediately and inexplicably asked if Karen was a heterosexual TV and claimed to "have lots of girls and couples in L.A. who want to make it with a crossdresser". It ended with the question "are you interested in hormones?"

Abby Greene, publisher of *TV-TS Confidential*, sent us the following accounting of her 1987 encounter with Salem:

"He had gotten my address from *Tapestry* and he started his letter with the 'I received your letter today', just as he did to you. I was luckier than most as I had twelve years of service time behind me. Then his letter mentioned that if I answered right back, that he could set aside three days to come to my area for a visit with me and other gendered persons in my state. I was to pay for a motel room on the stated dates and then send him the money for airfare to here.

"There would be a nominal charge for his 'expert' services and he would help me with all my problems. (Whatever these were.) When I reread his letter the second time, I wondered why he had singled me out. I could not understand why a well known doctor would be interested in me and why he needed funds to travel. There was a

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defiant stink to this letter that smelled of the barnyard. "I never did answer the letter, but I did receive a telephone call from a 'Dr. Philip Salem' and the call was collect. I asked the operator why this man, being a doctor would need to reverse the call. I asked for the phone number from where the call was coming from. When the operator came back to me, she said that the gentleman at the other end, had made a mistake in calling me and hung up.

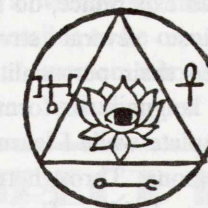
"I agree that this man causes hurt and distrust in the gender world. I had already been hurt by other men and this only added to it. I am a male to female TS and I went through a very lonely period of my life ... starved for male attention and affection. This is a very bad time in a TS's life and she is open to all the con artists.

"At the time I wanted to do a little SRS on Dr. Salem, with a rusty saw and sew him up after with rusty bailing wire from the barn. I would have been kind though. I would have coated the surgery with some Sloan's Liniment. (It burns like Hell.)"

I am pleased to report that we have received commitments from *Tapestry*, *LadyLike*, *Chrysalis Quarterly*, and *The Femme Mirror* to reprint last month's editorial in their upcoming issues. We have also made it available to all the gender community organizations with which we have exchange/reprint agreements for publication in their newsletters.

We will continue to make space available to report on Salem's activities, past and present, and hope to eventually determine his true identity so that legal action can be taken against him.

If you have any information to share, please send it to us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365. You may also e-mail us at [kymmer@xconn.com](mailto:kymmer@xconn.com), or fax us at (818) 347-4190.



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# A PERSONAL CATHARSIS

by Tala Brandeis

**M**y name is Tala Brandeis. Male, (whatever that is/was) to Female, (whatever that is/was supposed to be, might be, will become.)

Been in this process for the last thirteen-fourteen years, living, being female. Absolutely the best decision I've ever made. (Yes, it was a decision, coerced though it may have been.) The other option at the time was death, or at least so it seemed. Probably was. I had to have expression and recognition, in the open, alive, breathing, interacting as female, as woman.

**That I claim identity as both a woman and as a dyke angers some lesbian separatists, yet I am uncomfortable with some M2F transsexuals as separatists.**

Some would say, at the time of my coming out female, I was more teenaged girl than woman. They'd be right. Experiencing my second adolescence, the one I'd expected the first time. (That was a shock, the first adolescence.)

I find it rather interesting to have as my physical peers women who are approaching their Saturn return, while at the same time I am entering a mental and somewhat physical "middle age." A rather unique position, this blend of ages, post adolescence's. (There are many rare and wondrous things to learn here.)

Knowing I was female and learning how to be female, how to be accepted as female were two entirely different things. To some extent I needed to learn, to glimpse the epistemology of the first before I could experience, do the latter. Needing role-models, I chose several strong women, five to be exact, and blended their personalities and characteristics, as well as their language to form a meta-model to follow, to use as a template while I learned how to manifest my own female persona. Through trial and error, (mostly error), studying lesbian feminist authors, and applying new knowledge, new awareness, I learned how to interact in the world as a type of woman. This was/is necessarily a process, one I am still in, one I will hopefully be in for the rest of my natural life as woman.

Hormones were a blessing, truly a gift. My body finally gained some measure of congruence and my consciousness within the world changed in large measure as a result of the ingestion of hormones. I am so thankful for this blessing.

I'm an out S/M leather dyke. My sexual relationships are with other leather dykes. That I claim identity as woman

and as dyke angers some lesbian separatists. Conversely, although it may seem strange, I am somewhat uncomfortable with some male to female transsexuals who claim identity as dykes, as separatists. At issue here is the temporal quality of consciousness -- or, when is a woman a woman? I wonder at what point we, in our transformation into women, become woman enough to be accepted. When have we had enough experience as women to claim the identity and truly live it. I don't know. I know it happens, and not of course for all women, or with all women.

I think it interesting, lesbian women who are perceived as inappropriate to their culture, those non transsexuals who have made innumerable *faux pas* with their sisters, will never have to worry about being thrust out by virtue of their genes, or their current or prior genitalia, however inappropriate they may behave. (Unless of

course one decides to make the change from female body to male body.) Bigotry is not simply a white male enclave. Anyone can be a bigot. This is unquestionably different than being a sexist, even though the two may overlap. Sexists must only be male in a society dominated economically by men. It is in such societies where men are the ones having authority to exclude women from the processes of power, of economics. (Oops, radical feminist at work.)

I believe therapy a brutal process, designed to control the client. Considering imperatives to maintain a social structure allowing the continuation of the species this may not necessarily be a **bad** thing. I'm not so certain these are fundamentally unavoidable criteria. I believe diversity is necessarily necessary. To that end I would rather reinvent, redesign therapy to promote diversity. (See radical above.)

In reflecting on the way transsexuals are treated by providers it struck me how odd it is for them to assume we have no specialized knowledge. As if anyone who wanted to mutilate her body in such a way must needs have little education, and smaller still an intelligence. Is this not an attitude on the part of many clinicians?

How many of us have demanded specific medications, specific surgeries as our right? Is it not a right to do with our bodies what we choose? Are they not our own bodies? How much money is made from transsexual clients? Is it proportionate to the value received? Could support/education be cheaper and might the quality of surgical procedures be improved? What would it take to determine baseline needs and quality of surgical procedures? (If someone obtains a bad nose job from an

unqualified surgeon, there are legal remedies for those non-transsexuals. We have no such recourse.)

Having an authentic fountain of luck and a large potion of innate intuition, (not to mention an ego the size of Uranus), I chose a

therapist who had studied sexual diversity. That she choose a population with whom she could be guaranteed an income was a shrewd and rewarding move on her part. That she was sensitive, intelligent and could recognize gender proclivity patterns was a boon for me. We both got what we wanted. (Well, mostly.)

I know I'm female. I don't really have a conscious understanding of the epistemology of that last statement. I'm not so sure anyone can. I may never. I could care less. I could care more. I have a number of skills but that one, understanding the epistemology of gender, is still candidly ethereal, and I have come to doubt the **stamp** of gender.

Gender is a social construct. I believe my gender is, was and probably always will be what it is, whatever that may be. (Female if you must know.) This semantic gobbledygook of "gender dysphoria" is to some extent pointed at one's foot, rather than at the target and to use it as descriptive of our "condition", we may all be endangering and engendering the loss of our roots. So to speak. (Triple or quadruple, but hardly double entendre.)

I had several problems in my relations with the culture within which I had been thrust. One principal and glaringly obvious problem was "their" inability to strictly, overtly sense my gender and act upon such sensing consciously. That the messages were confusing, the conventions of language and physical movement double binds for the brain and the caveats against recognition too pronounced, too wrapped up in the unconscious processes of their body-minds, having been ground into their belief systems at young and tender ages. Mind you, they sensed my gender and commented on it often enough and at times with a certain ironic amusement.

The second problem, albeit the one creating the greatest dis-ease was the body that refused to develop as it was supposed to. I knew they had somehow made a gross error in labeling me "male" and at puberty my body would

transform into the female form it should have. It didn't. I was despondent. My own body refused to act as it was supposed to. I kept up faith in the logical, natural transformation until age seventeen or eighteen. Oh was I disappointed. (Not to say dissociated.) No, I was mortified. I did my best to drown myself in drugs. I almost succeeded in killing myself several times. How I survived is in small measure phenomenal and a story for another time. I profusely thank whatever spirits walking with me for the gift of my now rather delightful life.

I left drugs as I could not countenance the company I was keeping. (The drugs weren't all that good either.) I had done all I could to manage to live in the role assigned me, including but not limited to developing the proper attitudes, belief systems and body necessary to be "believed" as a member of that society of males. Yecchhh! After five years of **success** I was ready to kill myself. Four out of every five minutes of my day was spent processing gender and I was still able to successfully complete all my work, have compelling, stimulating conversation, interesting sex. I wonder, marvel at the vast capability of the body-mind given the need to concentrate on one subject to the exclusion of nearly all others and still accomplish all of life's necessary tasks.

I was comfortable in my gender. I knew who I was, what I was, I just could not share it with anyone else in my culture, ever, or so I believed. I was isolated, unable to fully completely converse, to commune, trapped within a foreign body. I waited to share my secret until I came out female.

Prior to coming out, I enjoyed sex as a woman. In my mind I would change bodies with my partner, and she would become male. I liked the physical power, the strength of the male body. Although I worked to find a comfort with the male body, I was genuinely uncomfortable with that maleness. (It was greasy, gross, thick, rough and hairy.)

As a woman in this culture, I imagine it may well be impossible to be comfortable with one's body, ever. I know of no women who **like** their bodies. We all have body issues including or perhaps especially the classically

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beautiful. Every woman knows her physical shortcomings and many only see those insufficiencies. I find it wholly reprehensible to live in a culture worshipping the male form and the male model of consciousness. I find men largely ugly and insensitive. On the other hand, I know sensitive and beautiful men. They are almost all without exception queer as hell. Delightfully so. (There are the het exceptions to Tala's rule and we love them for who they are. May they be able to teach, train the rest, the truly abominable.)

I am working a point here, well perhaps a couple. However, my principal bone of contention is the use of the term **GENDER DYSPHORIA**. (There's one of those unconscious words again.) Excuse me, but my gender has always been obvious, even when I was doing all I could to deny, suppress, hide, bury it. My dysphoria has always been with my physical body and my culture's need to identify me as male. I am culturally and morphologically dysphoric. To me gender and morphology are mutually exclusive in much the same way gender identity and sexual preference are mutually exclusive. I know many women with male gender identity who are quite happy with their female bodies. Some love gay men, others love het boys.

I am female gender identified, whatever that is or may be, and I was functionally dissatisfied with male anatomy, a male body. I was dysphoric with my morphology. Truth be

told, I still am with certain parts of it. However in this form, now, the physical dysphoria is much easier to manage.

I'm a Meta-morph. I have no desire to change my gender, for I am the gender I always was. I am a changeling. I am a person with female spirit. I am a person who must have a female body to be a complete person. I interact with the world in ways that are more appropriate both for me and my culture with my female body.

I'm a Meta-morph.

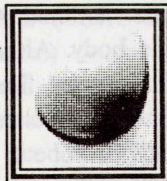
Enough of my ranting. Thank you for the opportunity for community.

*[Originally posted on cd-forum digest via Internet. Reprinted with the author's permission. Tala Brandeis may be reached at tala@crl.com.]*

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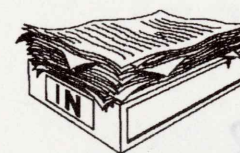
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## THE "GATEKEEPERS", REVISITED

by Roger E. Peo, Ph.D.

I recently had a rather unpleasant encounter with some transgendered persons who are activists for "the cause" which, in their terms, is that professionals simply do not understand their situation. In fact, it is presumptuous for them to claim that they do. Their arrogance and intolerance was such that I could not even respond to questions I was asked without being interrupted (really, I was shouted down). I respect other people's opinions and positions, so I would hope that mine would be respected in return. I was not trying to change anyone's mind, just present a different view.

This encounter began me thinking (again) about the issue of "gatekeeping" for hormone therapy and genital surgery. As a helping professional it pains me to see people put themselves in situations where they can be irreparably hurt. My ethical position is to ensure that, insofar as possible, persons who are my clients do not follow that path. Can/should my ethics extend beyond that boundary?

I believe that I have an obligation to disseminate information such as the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care to as many people as possible. It is my conviction that using them as a minimum set of guidelines can help people understand the consequences of their actions before the results are irrevocable. However, just as the activists above, there are some people who are firmly convinced that they know what is best for their particular life and do not want any impediments put in their way. Do I have any responsibility in such cases if they are not my clients? Probably not, however, I do not

believe that all controls and standards should be removed, for these people do not speak for all transgendered people.

Endocrinologists and surgeons have a different perspective. In our litigious society, they can be sued if they make irreversible physical changes in their clients. Some decisions are made and later regretted. Then

people lash out at everyone who was involved. While I am not an attorney, I suspect that a waiver of responsibility given to the doctor before surgery will not protect him from a later lawsuit. This often comes down to the issue of informed consent. An attorney can argue that the person's state of mind at the time nullified the waiver. Many doctors want some assurance that their patient will benefit from hormones or genital surgery. This assurance can come from following the Standards of Care.

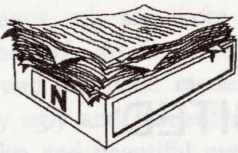
Are there surgeons who will operate without such assurances from a mental health professional? Of course there are. The people who regret having genital surgery often come from such situations.

In the end there is no simple answer. I do not believe that genital surgery and hormones should always be provided under the controls of the Standards of Care. If people want to have surgery without following them and there are surgeons that will perform it, then they should go

ahead. Choosing "shortcuts" should be allowed but we can't have it both ways -- get what we want and then blame someone else if it turns out it is not advantageous for us. There are always consequences from the actions we take.

**Can ... or should ... my ethics extend beyond ensuring that persons who are my clients do not follow a path where they can be irreparably hurt by therapy and surgery?**

*[You may contact Dr. Peo at P.O. Box 3445, Poughkeepsie NY 12603 or by phone at (914) 452-8405. All communications are kept confidential. Copyright 1993 by Roger E. Peo, Ph.D. This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if Dr. Peo's name and address appear with it. Other publications must obtain written approval from Dr. Peo. A copy of any reprint must be sent to Dr. Peo.]*



## WOMAN TO WOMAN

### LEAVING: IS IT WORTH IT?

by Linda Peacock

As I write this, it is December 30th, the last hours of a year, with the dawning of the New Year just peaking over the horizon. It is still very dark, but the promise of light is there.

It is also a bittersweet moment, for it is a time of leaving for me; not only is the past year nearly over, but it is a time to move on with things in my life, to leave the old and seek the new and unknown. A job promotion, one I have long sought and never thought I'd get, finally happened, and I must move nearly a thousand miles away from the only real stability I've had in my life. I'd never lived in a house more than two years, nor even the same

city for more than that, my first marriage was not a good one, with little or no continuity and little support, and I had little faith in my abilities and the possibility of actually living out my dreams. The last eleven and a half years have brought me stability, love, happiness, extended family, a house I love, advancement in my job locally, grandchildren who are the joy of my life. I have a good and happy marriage, with a husband who has gently pushed me, giving me the support and the encouragement to believe in myself and to begin progressing

toward advancement in my profession and achieving that progression.

This same man, who has given me all these things is also a crossdresser, a man who likes to dress in women's clothes. To many women, such a man is an obscenity, a perverted creature, to be abhorred and avoided. Many women would prohibit such a man as my husband for dressing, for fulfilling his deepest need, and many women would leave such a man. In fact, I actually know of a woman who has completely destroyed her husband's love for her, their home, their marriage, everything they shared in what seemed to be a very good relationship, simply because she cannot tolerate his wearing a dress. Her husband is one of the dearest, most honest, caring individuals it has been my privilege to know and call a friend, and even her own children cannot understand how

she can give this man up simply for wearing a dress.

How could I leave a man who has so unselfishly loved me, given me a life of stability, happiness, sharing, freedom to grow as a person and as a woman, simply because he wants to dress in feminine apparel? I couldn't, and I won't. How can I turn my back on caring and faith from someone, simply because he wears a dress? I can't and I won't.

As I leave people I have worked with for 14 years, as I leave beloved friends, most of whom are members of my support group, Sigma Epsilon, as I leave my home to move, I feel as though I am once again in the middle of a

divorce. There is an emptiness, a sadness for the good times of the past, the laughter and the pain we have shared, for the future we might have shared, but won't because I will be far away. There are the "what ifs" to deal with, including that part that I keep buried away, "Can I truly be successful at what I am about to do?" "Have I made the right decision?" All of these feelings were a part of my divorce 14 years ago, and time has proved that, yes, I made the right decision back then, and yes, I could make my life a successful one without that man. But even

now, 14 years later, the remembrance of the pain of that time still hurts, and I regret that it all ever happened. On the other hand, had it not happened, would I be the person I am today, married happily to a man I love and who loves me, just as I am? Probably not, and I would have taken a very different road than I have these past years.

No doubt this all sounds like a morbid time of reflection, of mourning, and perhaps it is. On the other hand, I think my gratitude for all I have offsets the morbidity, and paves the way for newness and hope of the future.

Reflection is good for the soul, I'm told, and I believe it. I think it is so important to look at what is really important in your life, and for those of us married to gender-gifted men, we have to look past the fact our husbands and partners wear dresses, and look at the person who lives

How could I leave a man who has unselfishly loved me, simply because he wants to dress in feminine apparel? I can't and I won't.

inside, not outside. Is our relationship with this man strong enough, good enough to make us want to continue it? Is the realization that we cannot change what or who he is something we can live with? Do we have enough love for him, and does he have enough for us to make this thing work?

Does the relationship give us what we need as a woman, as a wife, as a person, to make it worth keeping?

I want you to put yourself in my place; that is, leaving the life I've known for so many years, and striking out to the unknown. Is your marriage or relationship so painful that you are willing to do this, or is there something there, other than simple toleration of each other, and fear of the unknown, that makes it worth working at? Are there things of value in your relationship that make you want to stay, despite his dressing? Would saying goodbye be far more painful than staying and trying to make it work?

As wives and partners of gender-gifted men, we must ask ourselves all these questions. Is the dressing so abhorrent that you are willing to give it all up? Are there other things in the relationship which are actually the major focus of trouble, rather than the dressing? Truthfully, is the dressing where you are putting all your anger simply because you can see it?

If you are truly troubled by crossdressing and your

husband's part in it, then honestly reflect on all I have mentioned. Be totally truthful with yourself, weigh all the good things against the bad things you see in your relationship. Be honest enough to see if you might be the source of some of the problems, rather than simply blaming him for everything, and especially because he crossdresses. Be willing to take some responsibility for how the relationship is going, and be willing to give it all you've got to make it work -- just as he should do, too.

The leaving is very hard -- I am hurting inside that I am leaving my home, my old friends and co-workers; yet, that hurt is tempered by the fact that my husband is 100% behind me, supports me, is willing to leave, too, so that I can realize a life-long dream to reach that pinnacle of success, and the hurt is tempered by the knowledge that I am willing to deal honestly with the problems we have, acknowledging my imperfections and not dwelling on his. Think very hard about leaving, and if it is worth it to you, is it something that absolutely must be done for you to live in peace and to grow as a person and as a woman. Remember, it will hurt, there will be emptiness, there will be loneliness -- leaving, is it worth it?

[Linda Peacock is the director for wives' and partners' support on the Tri-Ess board of directors and publishes the Sweetheart Connection newsletter. She may be reached at P.O. Box 24031, Little Rock AR 72221.]

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by Ralph Judd



10/19/82: Judy (Valerie Curtin, center, with co-stars Rita Moreno and Rachel Dennison) masquerades as a man named Jerome to get back her job after she is fired by their tyrannical boss on *9 to 5*, ABC.



11/14/68: Don (Ted Bessell, left) masquerades as a woman to get information for an article on muggers after Ann (Marlo Thomas) is mugged herself, on *That Girl*, ABC.

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## THE BEARDED LADY

### LAYING THE RIGHT FOUNDATION

by Ricky Hunt

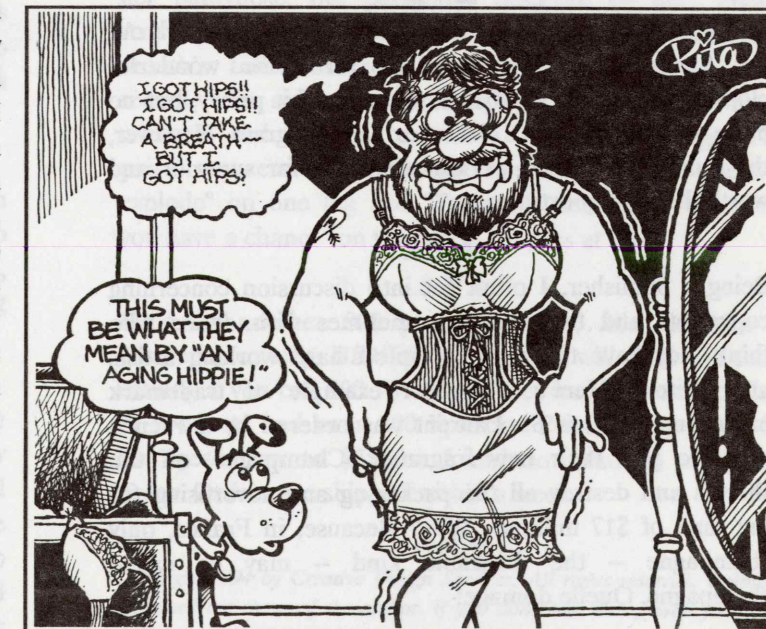
Illustration by Rita

Hip, hip, hooray! I got hips, or at least a reasonable facsimile. I don't know why it took me so long to want them. I guess it's because, like any other American Male who grew up reading *Playboy*, my eyes stopped at the breasts and seldom roved further. That is, until the "Pubic Hair Barrier" was broken, and then I seldom noticed the hips surrounding this newly revealed wonder. In these permissive days the idea that it was once necessary to pose models with a strategic towel, dog, hat or other object over the joining of the legs seems silly, but I assure those of you younger than I that it is true.

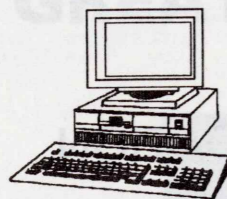
I must admit to a fascination with the female breast. When I first started dressing as a teenager, I was partial to DD bras. I liked big breasts ... they felt good, they bounced, they were the ultimate in culturally conditioned American femininity. I had a great big blind spot when I looked in the mirror and never noticed I looked like a deformed golem with a massive growth. If they had been real I would have needed some support mechanism, possibly based on the design of the wheelchair, attached to my bosom to keep it from pulling me over at a 35 degree angle.

I must thank my wife for setting me straight when she found out about my dressing. These days I wear a conservative B cup and look much better, thank you. But I never missed having hips until lately. Its embarrassing to admit it, but I was able to keep my skirts up by placing the hem over my pot belly for support. It worked quite well for 20 years, thank you, but lately I have lost some weight. Not by dieting, heaven forbid, or even running around the neighborhood sweating properly like a yuppie to loose weight. I did it the easy way -- I got laid off. In line with Murphy's Law of Unintended Results the sequence goes something like this. My employer panics about profits and reduces staff. Since I am a field technician, I sat in the car all day and drove to places, got out and did a little work, and then drove back. Nice work if you can get it, but hardly strenuous. Since there are several jillion other field techs in then same position, I have been doing temporary work in large factories for the past year. Large factories always have a pilferage problem, so all the parts are kept in the tool room for safekeeping. Thus, each time I need a wire, nut or tool, I get to walk across the factory to get it. Soon I noticed my pants are trying to fall off because the

exercise is making me lose weight. Not a bad side effect. However, soon I notice my skirts are slipping because my belly is too small to hold them up. Yes, I could wear dresses, but I have a lot of pretty skirts I want to wear. So being the logical gal I am I figured if I could stuff a bra to make it look like it was filled with real flesh, why couldn't I stuff a girdle? I'll tell you why not ... it's because genetic females do not tend to develop potbellies, and girdles are not shaped for them. Besides, in this day of feminism and freedom, genetic women are too damn smart to stuff themselves into a girdle and it's almost impossible to find one in my size.



But where there's a will, there's a way, or at least a stash of old clothes I haven't worn in ages. I managed to find the corset I once bought in a fit of fancy. It is still as stiff and unforgiving as the day I first put it on, but that is an advantage now. With some foam rubber, glue and scissors I was able to stuff it properly and now I have hips! It's fun! Look Ma! I have a figure. (Wait a minute: I haven't told her yet, so ... don't look, Ma, if you want to keep your sanity.) My skirts now hang properly, and sway when I walk. They swish around my legs. They no longer fall to my ankles and send me to the floor in a barrage of unladylike language. And who said that being laid off was all bad?



# Hot Buzz!

Edited by JoAnn Roberts



"Some people pay so much attention to their reputation that they lose their character."



The silly season is upon us once again. Fashion designers, without a clue as to how to dress the real woman of the '90s, have offered up baby-doll and slip dresses for the spring that shouldn't be worn by anyone over 18 (better make that 8). One fashion mag quipped, "... spring fashion shows... should have been rated NC-17, except that would've eliminated half the models." That, my dear ladies leaves us on our own to decide how we shall dress for the coming season. The answer, as always, is to be classically stylish rather than fashionable.



Speaking of classically stylish, you might want to check out the Spiegel mail-order catalogs for some wonderful clothing in sizes up to 20. Yes, they're a bit pricey, but no more so than Victoria's Secret or Lew Magram. However, the quality of fit and workmanship are far superior and worth the slightly extra cost.



Being a publisher, I often get into discussion concerning copyrights and trademarks, sometimes with dodos who think they have the right to rip-off hard working artists and writers. Here's a perfect example of trademark infringement. Yves St. Laurent was ordered by a French court to pull their new fragrance, Champagne, off the shelves and destroy all the packaging and advertising (to the tune of \$17 million). Why? Because, in France, only champagne -- the drinkable kind -- may be called champagne. Quelle damage!



The Queen of Prussia would never buy her clothing from a home shopping network, but she's certain that other do. To wit: in one 24 hour period, QVC, the shopping channel based in West Chester, Pa., racked up \$9.5 million in sales of women's Fall apparel. They sold 14,000 pairs of shoes and over 12,500 sweaters. It was said that Barry Diller, QVC HMFIC, needs the money to buy Paramount.



Stupid Fashion Award of the month -- Todd Oldham for underwear decorated with atomic symbols. Also spotted in the Oldham audience were RuPaul and Jaye Davidson. Paul was mistaken from behind by one wag for Ivana

Trump. I'm not sure which one should be insulted.



There is a glimmer of hope on the fashion horizon, however. Makeup is making a come-back. The waif look, having sung its one-note song, is losing favor. The argument goes: makeup offers diversity and there's not enough of that going around these days. Makeup for the mid-'90s, however, is not garish, obvious, or vulgar: it is subtle and charming. Cosmetic companies are offering discreet color options. Shades are very pastel and soft. Here's some tips from makeup artist Kevin Aucoin: Lips -- bold contrast against a bare face, with little or no makeup, a strong mouth looks great. Line and color lips with a pencil first. Try Chanel's Creme Lipstick in Berry or Prescriptives Demi-Matte Lipstick in Nymph. Eyes -- eye makeup is about impact and placement. To accentuate bone structure, play with dark tones in the crease encasing a pale dusting on the lid. Try Lanc?me Maquiriche Personal Eyes with Chameau in the crease, and Parchemin on the lid. Or, try Elizabeth Arden Eyecolor Naturals Duo in Apricot/Bronze. Finish with a lavish dose of mascara. Accenting the eyes, says Aucoin, is as simple as rimming them with black or gray and smudging it.



Speaking of pastels, what did you all think of the cover of *Tapestry* #66? Ugh!



There's been some cheating going on. (No, not you. Calm down.) Some makeup artists have been known to use a product designed for one application in a way not intended. For example, using lipstick as a blush or eyeshadow on lips. There is a danger, however, of causing infections due to cross-contamination. The rule if thumb is this: never, ever, ever use anything in or near your eyes that was not specifically developed for eye application. Conversely, if a product is approved for use near your eyes, you can probably use it anywhere on your face.



Anyone remember Mood Rings? (Oh, oh, the Queen is dating herself.) Well, those liquid crystal powered gems are still around, albeit in different forms. There's "mood" clothing and now Moodmatcher lipstick. The lipsticks come in 10 different colors and last up to 12 hours with

one application. The lipsticks appear anything but lip-colored in the tube (from green to yellow), but once on your lips, body heat changes the color to the desired shade. No price info.



*America Drinks And Goes Home* is the title of the first song I ever heard by Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention, but my favorite was (and is) *Brown Shoes Don't Make It* which seems to fit my personal philosophy to a "T." Mr. Zappa died on Dec. 4, 1993 after a painful struggle with prostate cancer. Mr. Zappa was considered by many to be a musical genius. He was also a staunch supporter of the First Amendment to Free Speech. Zappa made non-musical headlines in the early '80s when he testified before Congress about censorship and a bill sponsored by the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC). The PMRC was founded by Tipper Gore, wife of now vice president, Al Gore, Jr.



Congratulations and welcome are in order for GAGA, the Gulf Area Gender Alliance, New Orleans, Louisiana, and MGN, the Metro Gender Network, Brooklyn, New York. They are the latest additions to the family of organizations affiliating with Renaissance and its open-membership philosophy. Affiliates now number four in four states, with a fifth under consideration.



The buzz within Renaissance for December centered on the Holiday Party. Members were surprised to see two prominent board members in tuxedos rather than sequins, but the really hot buzz was about the absence of Managing Director-elect, Beth Marshall.



(Shameless plug) The *1994 Who's Who & Resource Guide to the International Transgender Community* is now available from CDS. The 1994 Guide is much expanded over the '93 edition with a much reduced price. The Guide contains detailed listings about people who contribute to the community welfare, organizations, businesses, and care providers. Pick up your copy through your local vendor or direct from CDS, PO Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406. Price from CDS is \$10 postpaid.



I didn't think that any cosmetic company could make me switch from my personal fave, Max Factor Active Protection Makeup, but a new product from a surprising source is giving me second thoughts. Matte Finish Foundation from Vernon's Specialties, in Waltham, Mass., is simply wonderful! It goes on smoothly and has very high "hiding power" (that's a term used to describe how well one coat of paint will cover another) for concealing skin flaws and the beard. At \$12.95 for 1.5 ounces, this may

seem a high price, but I did my entire face from just the foundation that was stuck to the inside of the lid after shipping. A jar of this stuff should last you a long, long time. The foundation is water-based, so it's great for oily skin. It is not, however, waterproof and one should be appropriately careful. On the other hand, clean-up is a snap with soap and water. Vernon sent along a couple other items for review. A pressed powder compact that complemented the foundation is \$9.95 -- a little on the high side. The makeup brushes sent were the real treat in the package. (I'm a sucker for makeup brushes.) These brushes are very high quality professional brushes, so don't expect to buy them for a buck a piece. The handles are wood (a good sign) and the bristles are natural hair, hand trimmed (a very good sign). Natural hair has a cuticle that "grabs" color and deposits it more evenly. Nylon bristles don't. The Complexion Powder brush is \$20 and the Blush brush is \$10. Vernon's stocks a complete line of brushes for every application. Call 'em at 617-894-1744.



Jenny Holzer is back in the fashion news. Well, actually, her pantyhose are back in the news. Well, actually, not her pantyhose, but pantyhose designed by her. There! Anyway, if you recall last month's Holzer Hot Buzz, this month's tidbit describes pantyhose with unique back seams. The seams are actually words that make up a message and each leg carries a different message. The pair I saw read "You're trapped on the Earth so you will explode" on one leg and "Turn soft and lovely any time you have a chance" on the other. I'll pass at \$25.



Let's try another 800 phone number, this time for a cosmetics catalog. BENEFIT cosmetics will send you their catalog if you call 800-781-2336. They have a complete line of products and over 100 lipsticks. Prices range from \$8 for eyeshadow to \$35 for foundation and no minimum order. Orders are shipped within a week.



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The TV/TS


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# THE NATURE OF IT

by Chrystine Julian

To observe the gender community, an untrained observer might think gender was only an issue of attire ... the micro-minis, stiletto heels and Frederick's wigs being the icons of womanhood. This is all well and good, so far as it goes. Yet too often the images of femininity projected are either crude mimicry or only a facade for male characteristics.

True womanness is an entirely different thing. Femininity goes with you wherever you are, whatever you wear. A large portion of that is how you see yourself, your surroundings, and others. You may be surprised to find out that most of the differences in the sexes were biologically programmed during the primal period of our existence on this world. The specialization was necessary

**If we want to know femininity, then we must study all its parts.**

for the unit (family and the species) to survive. Among those differing qualities are that women speak differently and listen differently, in fact they actually hear differently. They see things in a way that men can not see, and interpret those things differently. Women have a more acute sense of hearing. This is part of the mothering instinct. They listen to care for and protect themselves and their offspring. It is not uncommon for a woman's nipples to erect at the sound of an infant's cry. It is the ancient programming at work to prepare for feeding the child. Women's conversation was always for necessity. Male speech was used as another tool for dominance. Women make better communicators while men tend to make better speeches. To fully experience the *femme* nature of ourselves we need to touch both the physical nature (appearance, gestures, and clothing) and the spiritual nature as well. We must learn to be quick to listen and slow to speak. We must be protective of our own, and we must be willing to give of ourselves for others. As Mrs. Bombeck calls it, The World's Second Oldest Profession needs to be a part of us. Women, by nature of their monthly cycle, are more closely aware of the earth and it's cycles. We must learn to tune into the

If you see a news article relating to the gender community, please send it to us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365, or fax it to us at (818) 347-4190.

cycles, energies, tranquilities, violent upheavals, and serendipity that the Earth teaches us.

I have a suggestion on how to experience femininity on a deeper level. Leave the spiked heels, size 42DD forms, and 2" fingernails at home. Set aside a pretty afternoon. Dress down to your most comfortable pair of jeans, tennies, and T-shirt. Then find a place away from the concrete, asphalt, and steel girded mountains. It may be a city park or a private place deep in the woods. Find a comfortable place to set, preferably with your back against a tree. Then simply look and listen. Let your mind and soul fill with the sound of the breeze. Watch the birds, the squirrels, and even the insects. Like anything else, your talents will get better the more you exercise. Your hearing

will become better tuned, your eyes will see things you over looked before. You'll be surprised that you can make eye contact with many of the animals. When you do, try making different head and hand gestures at them. Amazingly, many of them will reply in kind. As you observe the world around you,

you are seeing the true nature of femininity, from the greatest teacher and example, Mother Nature herself. Several things will definitely happen. The first is that you will save a great deal of wear and tear on your *femme* wardrobe, not to mention cutting back on expenditures for makeup. When you return to the busy world of day-to-day life, people will look different to you. You will also find the place of peacefulness within you. Mother Nature can look pretty, frilly, and frail, as in the petals of a flower. She can also be rough, weathered, and uneven, like the side of a mountain. If we want to know femininity, then we must study all its parts. We will be better women, better people, and part of a better world for it.

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# A QUICK GUIDE TO WRITING TV FICTION

by Paul

In my years of reading TV fiction, it has become obvious that there is a standard formula. While things like characterization and a "story arc" (the process in which the plot creates sensations and feelings in the characters, which produce thoughts and realizations, which then produce learning and growth) are often missed, there must be a plot.

Here are the five elements that are absolutely vital to classic TV fiction. By including them, you too can crank out a TV story!

## PLAUSIBLE REASON

There needs to be some reason that the character has to crossdress. The main themes for this are listed below:

**Performance.** The character is going to do some performing: a role in a play; going to play a prank or a practical joke, such as an initiation; in a talent show, lip-sync contest or such; going to a costume party; dressing for Halloween.

**Disguise.** The character needs to have their identity hidden: to avoid danger, for example being hunted by mobsters; to allow access to something, for example going undercover; to replace someone, like a decoy or cover.

**Punishment.** The punishment occurs because the character has either done something: unmasculine, like running from a fight, and is shamed; anti-feminine, like cheating, and is forced to "walk a mile" in the offended shoes.

**Learning/Expression.** The character chooses to dress to learn and/or express something about themselves. For example, in *Tootsie*, he wants to prove acting ability. Dressing may be part of a ritual in a belief structure, like a rite of passage, or part of an experiment to see how the other half lives.

In creating a reason, it is useful to put the reasons together to form interesting compound reasons. In *Some Like it Hot*, the boys dress to get away from gangsters, but then perform. A band that can only get jobs dressed as girls are people who dress for access, but then perform. One may dress for Halloween, but then have to act as someone else in the office.

## SUPPORTIVE APPROVAL FORCE

It is important to remove the onus on crossdressing by having someone approve of the activity in some way. In punishment, because responsibility for the dressing is taken by the punisher and not the punished, this is easy. In other cases an appropriate approval force can be found. In a story about a boy who replaces a cheerleader, the whole team may be behind him. In a story about a

fraternity prank, a fraternity brother, or girlfriend may be supportive.

While the support force is usually a sex partner, it can be a figure that represents anyone in the family. An older woman may represent the mother, an older man in a lodge initiation the father, a roommate the brother, or a female co-worker the sister.

## MAGICAL TRANSFORMATION

The transformation from the male to female appearance is the magical point in most stories, as it is difficult to make an effective transformation without some magic.

While some stories may use only everyday magic, like padding and makeup, many stories choose to use more fanciful creations. Pills or shots that grow breasts, magic

**It has become obvious that there is a standard formula for TV fiction. By including the five vital elements, you too can crank out a story.**

spells that convert someone to female form or change souls between bodies, or elaborate appliances such as functional glue-on vaginas, or high technology like machines that rearrange matter have all been used.

Whatever the magic of the transformation, it is an essential part of the story. The transformation is the point where the constraints of the male role are broken and the character is freed to new sensations. The character must believe in the magic, so the magician should be credible, like an ex-model, makeup artist, scientist, or witch.

## NEW SENSATIONS

Now that the transformation has occurred, the payoff of the story begins. The character, freed from the male role, starts experiencing things that are new, different and very sensual. This may range from silky smoothness, to an admiring (and possibly lustful) glance.

This focus on sensation is not unique. Most romance novels are very focused on sensation, like taking baths, or interesting clothing. In writing TV stories, you can get many tips from these novels that are written to make women feel feminine, as you try to help men feel similar things.

## TASKS

The rest of the plot comes here. The character does some tasks that create new sensations and meet with approval. This may include a policeman walking down a dark street in high heels and feeling fear, or a band member playing in front of an audience. A mix of risk, excitement, fear

and pleasure is required in any situation.

While in many novels the tasks are purely sexual at this point, any highly charged behavior will work. Passing as a princess at a ball, and dancing with handsome men, having to sit at a table across from the boss, ending up in the women's room at a male stripper show, or flying to Atlanta may all be situations that create powerful emotions in the character and therefore in the reader. The best stories are at their most emotional and sensational here.

Mixing in approval, from both the approval force and others who may not have approved, is very useful here. The policemen may get a hug from the victim and a commendation from the boss, or the musician may get a record deal, as well as go home with an attractive partner.

#### RESOLUTION

This may be as simple as a line "... and he knew he was free" or as complex as a change in the life direction of the

character. It may be a return to normal, with only a sly grin, or some guilt triggered by the events that occurred during the freedom.

You may choose to have the character make some breakthroughs about the limitations of the female role, or about the false limits that he has seen in the male role. This will complete the arc that you have begun at the beginning of the story.

That's it. The basic creativity comes in creating and assembling plot elements. Of course, the skills of the writer in creating vivid description, real characters and resonant subtexts, would be nice to have, but those are the skills that move genre fiction into great writing.

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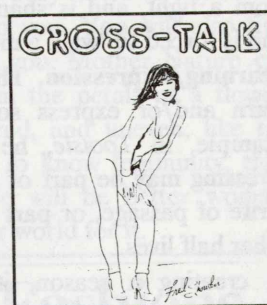
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**#46 (August '93)** contains an editorial on whether or not the Benjamin Standards for SRS should remain public knowledge; why talk shows don't always show our community favorably; communication as an important part of a relationship; real-life experiences of the early feminist organizations in Houston; a game plan for achieving equality in human rights; advice for coping with situations while "dressed"; the difference between homosexuality and bisexuality; how you perceive yourself and how others perceive you.

crossdressing in Brazil; and feminine traits.

**#47 (September '93)** contains an editorial on personal agendas within the gender community; what to say when someone discovers your "secret"; switching gender roles full-time; real-life experience appearing en femme among friends who never knew before; building a transgender archive; the history of crossdressing in the British theatre; integrating masculine

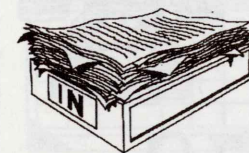


**#48 (October '93)** contains an editorial on "in your face" outreach; potential impacts of health care reform; a wife's perspective on learning to cope; suggestions for Halloween costumes; the semantics of the term "tomboy" and lack of an appropriate complementary term; avoiding "turning-off" an accepting partner; the most-asked questions about organizations and publications.

Also available: Issues #39\*, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44\*, and 45. Issues marked with \* are in extremely limited supply.

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A very few copies of a special promotional version of issue #39, containing a short story from Sandy Thomas, will be available for \$8.00 plus \$1.00 postage while supplies last. Order #39-S.



## INSIGHT

### CROSSDRESSER OR TRANSSEXUAL?

by Barbara Jean Jasen

I received a letter from my sister Jeanette in California. Jeanette is a transsexual and she seemed to feel that we as crossdressers seemed to confuse fantasy with reality.

As crossdressers we do fantasize quite a lot. The girl within us is real; she is as real as the man who's body she occupies, but her world is a world of fantasy. Many of us will say that crossdressing relaxes us. It is the cross from reality to fantasy that makes it so relaxing.

For many of us our fantasies involve the clothes themselves. How many of you like to dress as little girls? Do you ever wonder why you have this desire? Well for one thing, we never had our chance to be a little girl. We were raised as boys. To aid us boys in becoming proper men, Hollywood gave us the proper (?) image in our role models. Real

men like John Wayne, (and today) Clint Eastwood, Hulk Hogan, and Arnold Schwarzenegger. These people would show us just what a real man was all about. (I wonder as I write this where there is more B.S.-- The silver screen or the cow pasture.) Of course the little girl was given Miss America, the fairy princess, and a few others for their role models. Of course if we tried to model after one of these it would usually mean a trip first to the woodshed and then to the local torturer (psychiatrist) for a few sessions of brain washing.

And while we were running around playing cowboys and Indians, or G.I. Joe, our sister would play bride, or nurse, or Miss America or something like that.

O.K., now it is time for us to have our turn. Now we are not going to go down to the local mall dressed as a five year old girl, but in the privacy of our home, accompanied only by a bewildered but perhaps somewhat accommodating (???) wife or a sister who also would enjoy the play, we try to gain innocence lost. These kind of fantasies are really harmless and usually can be a lot of fun.

But then there are times when we do carry the fantasy just a little too far. We become a little too euphoric. We head blindly thru the tunnel, without knowing fully what

lies ahead. As crossdressers we want to look as feminine as possible, and for some of us, in an attempt to accomplish this end, we start looking to hormones. Yes the hormones will accomplish the task of feminizing the body, but they will do so much more than we had planned.

Transsexual "wannabes" are not really transsexuals, but have become so overly euphoric about their *femmesides* that they believe this is the route to take.

First off, we must remember that they are not M&M's; they are a drug. Because we have a large amount of testosterone in our bodies, the dose of estrogen we must take for them to accomplish their desired task must be large. This of course can create health problems, and if we make the dose too large, and for too long, they can kill us!

But that is only the start of what hormones will do. One of the real problems is that they will also change the way we look when we are in male clothes.

How long can you survive in this world if you lost your job? If that body now appears too feminine, can you get another job? Most important, can you function in this world as a woman? Can you survive on a much lower income than you currently make, can you survive on minimum wage? Consider that when we cross that line permanently, we take all the problems and the worries that our maleself has with us to the *femmeside*. That which was relaxing to us, is now everyday life. How will you relax if you cross the line permanently?

Now I mention all this because, as I said, all too often all too many of us become overly euphoric about the *femmeside*. We are happier in our *femmeself* than in our maleself and thus we start thinking that we are actually transsexuals. We are becoming what is starting to be referred to in the gender community as "transsexual wanna-be's". We are not really transsexuals, but we have become so overly euphoric about our *femmeside*, that we think this is the route to take.

Under the Benjamin Standards of Care, a minimum of one year of crossliving is required, but most transsexuals need much more time than that to be truly comfortable with their new body and life. To receive a letter of recommendation for an SRS you must prove to the

therapist that you are truly comfortable with your new gender.

I admit that I have never been to college, and I have had no classes in Psychology, sociology, or any other -ology for that matter, but from what I have been told, crossdressing and transsexualism are not even brought up in most of these classes. As a result, there really are very few therapists who are trained to tell if we are really transsexual or not. Many of us belong to open support groups, groups where crossdressers and transsexuals both belong, and in talking with a transsexual it can be quite easy to learn just what to tell a therapist to get him to give you that hormone prescription, or that letter of recommendation for SRS.

Do you enjoy sex? Hormones pose another problem then: the sex drive will go to zero and stay there. You will not be able to get an erection, and you will derive no sexual pleasure in crossdressing.

How do you determine if you are really a crossdresser or a transsexual? There really is no magical factor. Perhaps the only thing I can think of is to ask yourself the question "Do you get a thrill out of crossdressing ... does it excite you in any way?" For a true transsexual there is no thrill in wearing women's clothes, there is no excitement, for these are the natural clothes for them. It is more of a feeling of relief that they have. Actually the true relief will not come until they have had the operation, for then it will be a feeling of release from the lie they have been living and from the prison that has held them.

Dallas Denny of AEGIS wrote in response to my question if there is any reliable way to tell a crossdresser from a transsexual. She pointed out that since the diagnosis of transsexualism is based on self-description, the best way is to judge how an individual feels. But the diagnostic criteria for transsexualism is intense and continual gender dysphoria over a two year period. If at any time one finds themselves not wanting to be a woman, then they should set the clock back to zero. Episodic desires over a two-year period, or even across a lifetime just don't cut it.

For those of you who are questioning your gender status I beg of you to please contact Dallas at the American Education Gender Information Service, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur GA 30033. She will be able to direct you to a therapist in your area who is qualified to make the determination as to your gender status. Perhaps the most important thing I can advise is to **not rush things**. Do not try and bypass any steps.

Fantasies can be fun, and often times they can be a relaxing thing, but let's not get carried away with them. Learn where fantasy ends and reality begins.

[Barbara Jean Jasen can be contacted at 1436 Brett Dr., Memphis TN 38127-9136.]



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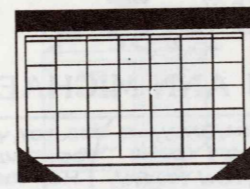
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# NATIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

- February 25-27, 1994:** 6th Annual "Texas 'T' Party", San Antonio TX, sponsored by Boulton & Park Society. Information from P.O. Box 700042, San Antonio 78270, or by calling (210) 980-7788.
- March 12-20, 1994:** International Foundation for Gender Education "Coming Together-Working Together" convention, Portland OR. Information from IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland MA 01778.
- March 17, 1994:** "A DREAM of a Reunion", Portland OR, for all who attended any of the DREAM conventions on the 1970's and 80's; held during the IFGE convention. Registration information from Jennifer Richards c/o StLGF, P.O. Box 9433, St. Louis MO 63117.
- March 18, 1994:** "A Night at Esprit", Portland OR, held during the IFGE convention. See May 20-22 listing for information.
- April 21-25, 1994:** "Moonlight in Manhattan", New York City, presented by the Greater New York Gender Alliance. Information from Lynda Frank, 330 W. 45th St. #3-H, New York 10036, or by calling (212) 765-3561.
- April 27-May 1, 1994:** "California Dreamin'", Burbank CA, sponsored by Powder Puffs Of California with participation by Neutral Corner, Alpha Chapter Tri-Ess, Ladies' Knight Out, and CHIC. Details from PPOC, P.O. Box 1088, Yorba Linda CA 92686 or by calling (714) 779-9013.
- May 19-22, 1994:** "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA, sponsored by Creative Design Services. Information from CDS, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406, or by calling (215) 640-9449.
- May 20-22, 1994:** "A Taste of Esprit", Port Angeles WA, sponsored by Emerald City, NWGA, and Cornbury Society. Details from P.O. Box 873, Kirkland WA 98083-0873.
- June 8-12, 1994:** 12th Annual "Be All You Want To Be", Pittsburgh PA. This year's host organization is TransPitt. Details from P.O. Box 23442, Pittsburgh 15222.
- August 17-21, 1994:** Third Annual International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, Houston TX. Information from Phyllis Randolph Frye, 5707 Firenza St., Houston 77035-5515, or by calling (713) 723-8368 (fax: 723-1800).
- September 15-18, 1994:** "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA. See May 19-22 listing.
- October 4-7, 1994:** "Dignity Cruise V", steamboating aboard the historic Delta Queen. Details from Peggy Rudd, 1811 Crutchfield, Katy TX 77449 or by calling (713) 347-6563.
- October 16-23, 1994:** 20th Annual "Fantasia Fair", Provincetown MA, sponsored by Outreach Institute. Write Alison Laing, P.O. Box 941, Southeastern PA 19399-0941 for details.
- May 17-21, 1995:** "Esprit '95", Port Angeles WA. See May 20-22, 1994 listing for information.

*(Please send information on national gender community events to Cross-Talk, P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365.)*

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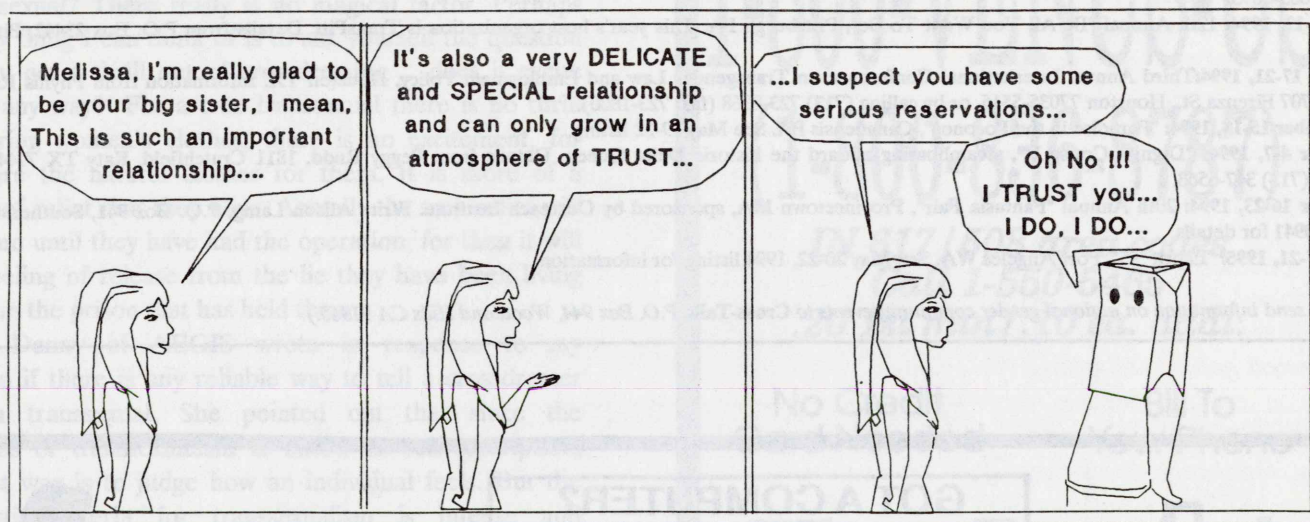
## THE ADVENTURES OF KAREN

by KAREN ANN MICHAELS

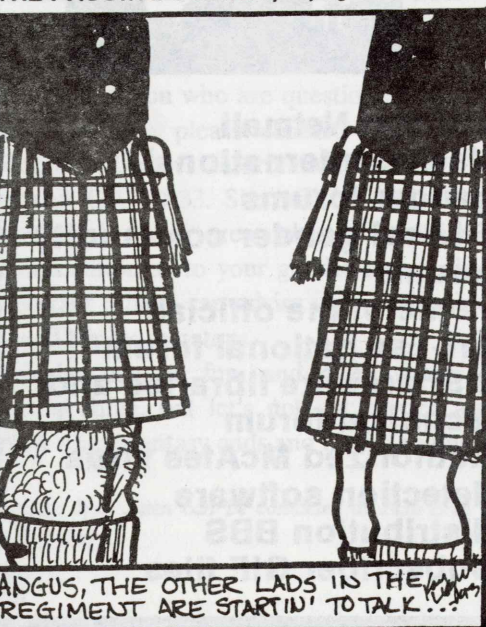


## CD

By Sherri Belman



## THE PASSING SCENE by Kay Lightner



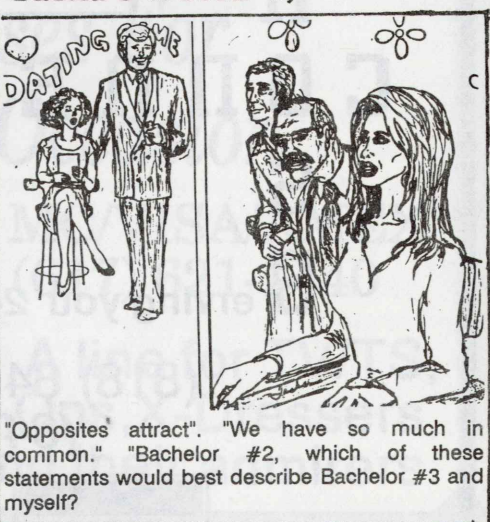
ADGUS, THE OTHER LADS IN THE REGIMENT ARE STARTIN' TO TALK...

## WHAT'S ON THE TV TONIGHT? by Christine-Jane



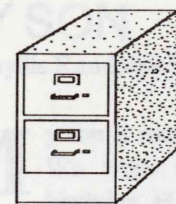
BUT WHEN YOU SAID "DRESS FOR DINNER" - I THOUGHT THAT YOU MEANT ...!

## Tasha's World by Tasha Barnard



"Opposites" attract". "We have so much in common." "Bachelor #2, which of these statements would best describe Bachelor #3 and myself?"

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## THE BEST OF CROSS-TALK

## TRAN MUSIC

by Phaedra Kelly

I thought I might write a piece on transgender music. The problem is, some of it's spread across the decades on obscure labels by half-known artists.

Starting in the late 60's and early 70's, there is the Great and Original Mr. Bowie, first, and for my money, the only true gender bender. One can discount such one hit wonders as Herbert Khaury (Tiny Tim).

A contemporary survivor with Bowie is Iggy Pop. His post-modern work proves more enjoyable than his acid/coke-induced, slurred dirges of the past. Likewise, Lou Reed, one-time drag queen rocker in the Velvet Underground has emerged, clean of drugs and BS, with a modern tribute to Andy Warhol, *Songs for Drella*. (Drella was Warhol's nickname, a combination of Dracula and Cinderella.)

Alice Cooper began a little later than Bowie and influenced modern Rocky Horror-style drag rock. Watchers of MTV can witness the results. But such bands as Poison and Motley Crue stem from a group of original and genuine GT rockers known as the New York Dolls. Of the four Dolls, only two remain alive and well (one being David Johansen); the third is on skid row and the fourth is dead. New York Dolls albums fetch a small fortune in secondhand dealer shops now.

Of all the '70s glam rockers, Gary Glitter has emerged time and again, whereas other Brit contemporaries like Barrie Blue have failed and faded. Among the U.K. gender benders, Steve Strange fulfilled his own prophecy and faded to grey, while Boy George, Marilyn, Tasty Tim and Peter Burns of Dead or Alive have achieved obscurity in only a few short years. Adam Ant is currently seeing a resurgence in popularity but whether or not he survives remains to be seen.

Really obscure is Peter, a Japanese sisterboy, who predates Boy George by ten years. Very beautiful and untraceable now, Peter's songs were sung in a good falsetto to an interesting beat. Finding one of his albums now would be a real coup.

A native of India, Loren Ring Marcell, sang '60s standards. Sadly, when she arrived in the U.K., it was pointed out to her that she was born a male, a detail she, in her sheltered environs, had never once realized. The shock proved too much for her and the last I heard she was getting support from a TS self-help group. But she did cut some records in the U.K. before the callous ignorance

of the West destroyed her.

You all know (don't you?) that lovely Amanda Lear, formerly Peki de Oslo, formerly Alain Tapp, is a TS. Her records are still available on order in the U.K. Her husky European voice is sexy and soothing.

A more raunchy TS is Jayne (Wayne) County, who made her name in the cult movie *Jubilee*, co-starring Toyah and Adam Ant. Jayne is a cross between punk and rock, with a large following in London. Her most specific "gender" tracks are *Man Enough to be a Woman*, and a cover of *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*.

Synthesizer music brings to mind any album by Wendy (Walter) Carlos, *Switched On Bach* being her most well known. Walter became Wendy just before cutting (no pun intended) the score for Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Many bands have cut at least one Tran track: The Who's *I'm a Boy*, the Kinks' *Lola* and Aerosmith's *Dude Looks Like a Lady*.

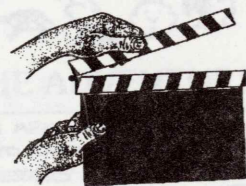
There is one song of late that I feel is significant. *Secret Garden*, from the album *Rage* by T'Pau. *Rage* was T'Pau's second album and it took a dive. Carol Dekker of T'Pau discussed her early life as a barmaid, a cross between a tomboy and nympho, overcompensating, she admits, for a difficult identity crisis. She told the press that she often feels she wants to be a man and that her gender identity is most vulnerable when she is singing on stage.

Dekker told the press that *Secret Garden* was inspired by a "radio talk show with a transvestite" that she'd heard. It's possible that the press used TV instead of TS since the lyrics suggest a surgical change, although they could suggest a spiritual/mental change just as easily.

In the video for *Secret Garden*, Dekker is dancing and striding with defiance through a landscaped maze, overturning wheelbarrows, pulling people's hats over their eyes, making a statement of personal freedom, regardless of others' bigotry.

She sings, "You'll never know how it feels not to be one thing or the other. If there was a world without hypocrisy, you never know, I might just be something you need." So, *Secret Garden* has been adopted (by me) as the official international anthem of the Gender Transient movement. And ... it's easy to dance to!

[Originally published in Cross-Talk #21 (November 1990).]



## MOVIE REVIEW:

### *Farewell My Concubine*

by Charlene Day

This movie spans a period of over 50 years of China's history and shows the effect of living conditions on people before the invasion by Japan, during the invasion and World War II years, and under Nationalist and Communist rules.

In particular it focuses on the lives of two boys in a Beijing Opera Company starting in 1924.

I found the movie to be intriguing and sometimes disturbing as it portrays the harsh life of the boys and young men in the Opera Company.

As crossdressers we may be fascinated by the boy who is forced to play a concubine in the Opera, but there is much more to the movie. Because it takes place in China it shows the commonality of human experience in such things as, love, hope, fear, and hate.

Duzi is a young boy that is given over to the Opera Company by his mother. The Master of the Opera forces Duzi to play the part of a concubine in the Opera. He is beaten severely by the Master, as are other boys, when they don't perform properly.

One line he must sing is "I am by nature a girl, but I'm really a boy" and when he obstinately refuse to reverse the two genders in the words, he is beaten.

The Opera is about King Cu, who is defeated by a warlord named Han when all of King's soldiers desert him, and he is left only with his horse and his last concubine. The movie draws its name from the name of the Opera. (I don't know if there really is such an Opera.)

Duzi eventually plays the part of the concubine of King Cu and his friend Shitou plays the part of the King.

They put on a command performance for a regional warlord Kahn and are applauded greatly. Duzi is so

convincing in the part that Kahn has Duzi brought to his quarters for you know what.

The scene moves to the year 1937 and Duzi and Shitou are now famous and they have changed their names to Dieyi and Xialou.

The performance of Duzi (now Dieyi) is so good that the comment is made that Dieyi has blurred opera and real life, male and female. Indeed he has. He must compete for the affection of Xialou with Juxian, a whore from the House of Blossom. To make matters worse Xialou marries Juxian.

The story moves through the period of the Japanese invasion, during which Dieyi is coerced in to singing for the Japanese, during the War and after the War to the eve of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Dieyi and Xialou are tried for being Japanese sympathizers and acting contrary to revolutionary teachings. I will leave the final scenes for you to enjoy.

This is a very powerful movie that depicts the exploitation of people and the effects of society on their lives. There are some superb performances and outstanding visual scenes. The movie was co-winner of the *Palme d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival and is worthy of your viewing.

The new **Cross-Talk** style book is now available for those wishing to submit articles for publications. To receive a copy, send a #10 SASE to *P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills, CA 91365*.

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## MY SON

by Phyllis Randolph Frye

**M**y son is named Randy, and I love him very much. We were separated in 1976 before his sixth birthday. He is now in his mid-twenties. Up until the end of 1991, we'd only seen each other once during that span of nearly sixteen years. It was worth the wait.

Our families are very important to all of us in the gender community. There is so much pain that we experience merely to be true to who we are. Recently, a friend of mine had a heart bypass where the doctors took a large

**Being alive and being whole ... that is all we transgendered folk seek. Yet the love of our families is always placed in jeopardy.**

vein from his leg and planted it in his chest. I did some self-talk ("They tell us that if God wanted us to be women, God would have done so. Yet, did God want this man to die only to have the death interfered with by special surgery? And speaking of surgery, what makes mine sinful and his not?") while he told his story to me, all the while he was surrounded by his loving spouse and kids. But since he and his family are friends, I kept my self-talk to myself that night because I didn't want to dampen our joy over his being alive.

Being alive and being whole. That is all we transgendered folk seek. Yet, the love of our families is always placed in jeopardy. Divorce, estrangement, ostracism, embarrassment, you name it: it simply is not consistent. In addition, it's just not fair. But it happens to us all to some degree. It happened to me and it took almost sixteen years to work it out with my son. (It's still not completely worked out with my parents and siblings.) What I offer in this writing is not the solution, but simply a solution to how to handle the kids.

My first spouse divorced me in 1972 when my son was two because of my crossdressing. During the next several years I visited Randy and spent those days with him. I still had a beard then and was trying to make it as a man. In 1975, I began to crossdress in public on occasion. My hair and nails became longer, my eyebrows thinner. He became puzzled by my appearance and his mother was becoming very nervous when I visited. **I made a deliberate decision: I would give my son and his mother the space they needed to come to terms (at their own speed) with who I was.**

**I made that decision after much thought and prayer. You see, I knew that even though I'd spent most of my life surrounded by my parents and siblings, we were growing**

**apart over who I was becoming; therefore, physical nearness was no guarantee.** I also hoped that by sacrificing some time now, we might have the rest of our lives as good friends. What bothered me also was how did I ensure that he didn't grow up hating me for feeling abandoned.

So I wrote to him, every single month for those sixteen years. Much happened. His mother and I almost squared off twice in the legal arena, she remarried, my son decided for himself that he wanted to meet Phyllis once when he was about eleven, his mother asked me and I complied with an inflationary raise in the child support, I pledged to him continuing the monthly payment for four more years after he turned eighteen. In short, I walked a fine line between being too close and staying too far

away.

Yes, I cried a lot over it. Every month when I wrote my son the wound would open again. I was always honest to him and simply reported what was going on in my life. Father's Day was an annual hell because I couldn't be close to either my father nor my son.

Three days before Christmas 1991, he called. He was visiting his grandmother in San Antonio and wanted to know if I could make a special trip to visit. Well, I said yes (while I cried). I told my spouse the wonderful news (and I cried). I called my mother to tell her (and I cried). I drove to the courthouse the next morning (and I cried). I told several courthouse friends about the call (and cried on each telling). I drove to the airport (and I cried). I flew (and cried again). When we first met and hugged, I cried.

It was a wonderful day. We spent most of it together. When I hugged him, he hugged me back. His mother and grandmother were very gracious and loving and hugged my as well. He was not at all shy about me. **It was very warm and very healing!!** He told me this (paraphrasing what I remember) during one of our many talks:

"You did a good job. You stayed far enough away for me to come to terms with who you were. Yet, you wrote to me every single month for sixteen years: I never doubted your love. I always knew that you were close by and would come at a moment's notice. I always knew that you wanted me."

As we parted, he indicated that we would get together again. He is in college, and he works part time. It probably won't be until this summer, but it will be. I know in my heart that it will be another visit with much warmth again, and I feel sure that I will cry once more. So much healing was done: so much more to be.



## HOTLINES

These hotlines are run by non-profit organizations, and may not be answered "live" at all times as a result. Listings followed by % are for groups known to be sexually-oriented; listings followed by # are for primarily TS-oriented groups; listings followed by @ are for heterosexual TV/CDs only. Most other listings are for "open" (both TV/CD and TS) groups. While we make every effort to keep this listing updated, phone numbers may change without notice. If you find an incorrect listing, please let us know!

### NEW ENGLAND/NORTH ATLANTIC REGIONS:

CD Network, Rochester: (716) 251-2132  
Chi Delta Mu Chapter Tri-Ess, NYC: (201) 663-0772 @  
Cross Dressers International, NYC: (212) 243-0837  
East Coast F2M Group, Cambridge: (617) 584-7616 #  
Eulenspiegel Society, NYC: (212) 477-6588%  
Expressing Our Nature, Syracuse: (315) 475-5611  
Gender Identity Program, NYC: (212) 969-0888#  
Girls' Night Out, NYC: (212) 794-1665 ext 202  
GLEBITS, Boston: (617) 323-6082  
Images, Hartford: (203) 779-2465  
Imperial Queens of New York: (212) 580-9862  
Int'l. Foundation for Gender Education: (617) 894-8340  
Lambda Chi Lambda Chapter Tri-Ess, Utica: (607) 547-4118@  
Long Island Femme Expression: (516) 538-5304  
Metropolitan Gender Network, NYC: (718) 461-9050  
My Choice, Baltimore: (410) 732-4546  
Outreach Institute, N. Portland: (207) 775-0858  
Reflections, Boston: (617) 323-6082  
Renaissance Greater Philadelphia Chapter: (215) 630-1437  
Renaissance LSV Chapter, Harrisburg: (717) 780-1578  
Renaissance S. Jersey Chapter: (609) 435-5401  
Sigma Nu Rho Chapter Tri-Ess, Trenton: (609) 586-1351 @  
Silent Passage, Rhode Island: (401) 438-7417  
Tiffany Club, Boston: (617) 891-9325  
Transgender Educational Ass'n., Washington: (301) 949-3822  
Transgenderists Independence Club, Albany: (518) 436-4513  
Transpitt, Pittsburgh: (412) 231-1181  
Washington-Baltimore Alliance: (301) 277-5475  
XX (Twenty) Club, Hartford: (203) 646-8651 #

### THE SOUTH:

American Educational Gender Info. Service: (404) 939-0244  
Atlanta Gender Explorations: (404) 962-3118#  
Black Rose, Arlington: (301) 369-7667 %  
Carolina Trans-Sensual Alliance, Charlotte: (704) 551-8838  
Fantasia, Orlando: (407) 425-4527 #  
GDA North Carolina: (704) 642-1914  
Gender Information Network, Gainesville: (904) 332-8178  
Grace & Lace, Mississippi: (601) 982-7678  
Louisville Gender Society: (812) 944-5570  
Montgomery Institute, Augusta: (404) 603-9426 #  
Montgomery Institute, Gainesville: (904) 462-4826 #  
M.O.R.E., Ft. Lauderdale: (305) 966-2138  
Mu Sigma Chapter Tri-Ess, Arkansas: (501) 972-1826 @  
Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter Tri-Ess, Central FL: (407) 677-9540 @  
Phoenix, Asheville: (704) 259-9428  
Serenity, Hollywood: (305) 436-9477  
Sigma Epsilon Chapter Tri-Ess, Atlanta: (404) 552-4415 @  
Starburst, Tampa-St. Petersburg: (813) 527-1012  
Tennessee Vals, Nashville: (615) 664-6883  
TransGender Educational Ass'n, Arlington: (301) 949-3822  
Virginia's Secret, Richmond: (804) 320-8737

### MIDWEST & VICINITY:

Central Illinois Gender Assoc.: (309) 444-9918  
Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Chicago: (708) 364-9514 @  
Chicago Gender Society: (708) 749-1202  
City of Lakes Crossgender Comm., Minn'pls: (612) 229-3613  
Cross-Port, Cincinnati: (513) 474-9557  
Crossdressers & Friends, Kansas City: (913) 791-3947  
Crossroads, Detroit: (313) 537-3267  
Crystal Club, Columbus: (614) 777-0648  
Gender Dysphoria Support, Shawnee Mss'n: (913) 371-0658#  
Indiana Crossdressers Society, Indianapolis: (317) 475-0617

Iowa Artistry, Cedar Rapids: (319) 842-2654  
Minnesota Freedom of Gender Expression: (612) 220-9072  
N.G.D.O., Detroit: (313) 842-5258#  
Paradise Club, Cleveland: (216) 586-9292  
Quad-City Society for Sex. Ed., Davenport: (319) 324-9641  
St. Louis Gender Foundation: (314) 997-9897  
Sunday Society, Chicago: (312) 252-7024  
Wichita Transgender Alliance: (316) 682-9131

### SOUTHWEST/MOUNTAIN REGION:

Alpha Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Amarillo: (806) 359-7714 @  
Bluebonnet Coalition, San Antonio: (210) 656-4163  
Boulton & Park Society, San Antonio: (210) 545-3668  
CrossDressers International, Tulsa: (918) 582-6643  
Delta Omega Chapter Tri-Ess, Dallas: (817) 429-1929 @  
First Saturday, El Paso: (505) 434-5144  
Gender Crisis Help Line, Tucson: (602) 293-3456  
Gender Identity Center, Denver: (303) 458-5378  
Gulf Coast Transgender Community, Houston: (713) 780-4282  
Heart of Texas Gender Alliance, Austin: (210) 980-7788  
Help Me ... Accept Me, Dallas: (214) 404-1926  
ReCast, Dallas: (214) 641-4842 #  
Second Image, Austin: (512) 515-5460  
TS Peer Support, Houston: (713) 333-2278#  
Tau Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Houston: (713) 988-8064 @  
Texas Ass'n. of Transsexuals, Houston: (713) 435-7293 #  
Tri-Plex Gender Association, Waco: (817) 867-1077  
West Texas Gender Alliance, San Angelo: (915) 944-1381

### PACIFIC NORTHWEST:

Emerald City, Seattle: (206) 284-1071  
Ingersoll Gender Center, Seattle: (206) 329-6651  
Northwest Gender Alliance, Portland: (503) 774-8463  
Rose City Gender Center, Portland: (503) 230-1036  
Salmacis Feminist Social Society, Eugene: (503) 688-4282  
Transsexual Lesbians & Friends, Seattle: (206) 292-1037 #

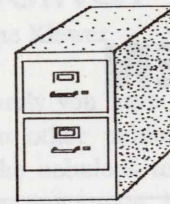
### THE WEST COAST (CA & HI):

Alpha Chapter Tri-Ess, Los Angeles: (213) 876-6141 @  
Amer. Transsexual Education Center: (213) 389-6938 #  
Androgyny, Santa Monica: (213) 856-4867  
CHIC, Los Angeles: (818) 766-0520 @  
Diablo Valley Girls, Concord: (510) 849-4112  
Educational TV Channel, San Francisco: (510) 549-2665  
Hawaii Transgendered Outreach, Honolulu: (808) 923-4270  
Ladies Knight Out, Irvine: (714) 262-9105 @  
Neutral Corner, San Diego: (619) 685-3696  
Powder Puffs Of California, Anaheim: (714) 779-9013  
Rainbow Gender Association, San Jose: (408) 984-4044  
Sacramento Gender Association: (916) 482-7742  
Sigma Sigma Beta Chapter Tri-Ess, Lake Tahoe: (916) 544-2460 @  
Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess) Nat'l.: (209) 688-9246 @  
Swan's Inner Sorority, San Jose: (408) 297-1423

### CANADA:

Club Met, Montreal: (514) 528-8874  
Entre Femme, Quebec: (418) 529-1132 #  
F.A.T.E., Vancouver: (604) 254-9591  
Gender Mosaic, Ottawa: (613) 749-5203  
Illusions Social Club, Calgary: (403) 486-9661  
Monarch Social Club, Ontario: (416) 949-6602

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## 'ZINE REVIEWS!

by Kimberleigh Richards

The mail box is filling with 'zines faster than I can review them, so for at least the next month or two I'll be reviewing three per column. Hope you find some of these of interest ...



First up this month is a publication titled *Anima, Animus, Anime*, a compilation of short reviews of Japanese manga (comics) and animation videos featuring transgendered themes. This ten page booklet was put together last summer in electronic form by cartoonist Ted Delorme for the Comic Category readers of the GENie service, and he decided to print it for fans of Japanese manga who don't subscribe to GENie.

The descriptions of many of these read like the plots of TV fantasy novels, and Ted has included publisher information on the manga series he reviewed, although he openly admits that it may be difficult to find some of them through American distributors. The booklet does include some samples of the actual comic art, plus some cover art in the same vein by Ted (who is himself a very talented cartoonist).

I'm hoping to convince Ted to write an article on this phenomena for an upcoming issue of *Cross-Talk*, or perhaps provide some cover artwork. In the meantime, he'll make the booklet available for \$1.00 postpaid until he runs out of copies.

[Ted Delorme, P.O. Box 30183, Charleston SC 29417-0183.]



I am embarrassed to admit that our second entry this month sat on the pile of 'zines waiting to be reviewed for so long that it's **second** issue came out in the meantime. *Gendertrash from Hell* was mentioned a few months back in Paula Jordan Sinclair's "NewsQueen" column, and has shortened its name to simply *Gendertrash* for its second issue. It's a very interesting mix of artwork, collages, poetry, personal insights, plus a lot of extremely useful information, such as a three page feature on safe electrolysis, resources (issue #1 contained listings for health care clinics in the Toronto area, issue #2 listed several 'zines of interest to transgendered/transsexual people), and results of various research studies on transsexuals with AIDS.

It's strange in some ways, insightful in others, definitely interesting. They'll accept cash, checks made payable to

cash, IRCs, or Canadian postage stamps totalling \$4.00. They'll send a copy free to anyone who has been institutionalized or imprisoned.

[genderpress, 552 Church St. #500-62, Toronto ON M4Y 2E3, Canada.]



The third 'zine in this month's stack comes to us from Atlanta, Georgia. It's a quarterly celebration of the local drag scene called *Popcorn*, and it's sort of like *Dragazine* meets *My Comrade*.

The issue the publishers sent us had photos of an office party at the magazine's "World Headquarters" that featured a guest appearance by RuPaul; a local gossip column accompanied by photos of the local drag celebrities, including a full page of photos from an event called "WigWood"; a strange photo feature entitled "Glamorexia"; another photo feature of an event called "Wigstox '93" (I guess they have a lot of drag wig events in Atlanta!); a "Dear Abby" take-off; reviews of local drag performers, interviews of same, etc. etc. etc. ...

Drag is an interesting animal. It's definitely **not** the type of crossdressing they'd allow in Tri-Ess or at the Texas "T" Party. But if you find drag fascinating, this 'zine is worth checking out. The publishers didn't put a price on the cover, but it was listed in a recent issue of *Factsheet Five* at \$3.00.

[Popcorn, 325 Edgewood Ave. SE, Atlanta GA 30312.]

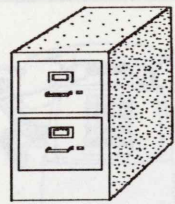


While I'm on the subject of *F5*, I'd like to thank its publisher, R. Seth Friedman, for giving me a copy of his *'Zine Publishers Resource Guide* at the recent "'Zine Scream" event here in Los Angeles. We're working on adding a couple dozen alternative press bookstores across the country and some 'zine distributors, none of whom we knew about before Seth was kind enough to offer his assistance.

You can get a single copy of *F5*, which reviews 'zines of all kinds, by sending \$6 (\$8 outside North America) to P.O. Box 170099, San Francisco CA 94117-0099.

Later!

**MOVING?** Please send your new address six to eight weeks in advance to P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365. Include your four-digit subscriber number.



# THE SHOPPING MAVEN

by Angela Gardner  
Managing Editor, *The Renaissance News*

**Product:** Gaff  
**Source:** Fashion Fantasy, 9013A Centreville Rd., Manassas, VA 22110; 703-330-1900  
**Cost:** \$30 plus shipping & handling  
**Rating:** B+

If you enjoy wearing clothes that make you blend in with the rest of the ladies then you have undoubtedly tried leggings or stirrup pants. Fashionable women seem to live in skin-tight, show-every-curve spandex and while that's great for them, as crossdressers we have a few extra bumps that spandex tends to accentuate. Some crossdressers who tried the skin tight look had no need of a detective to find the precious family jewels!

The answer to this dilemma, ladies, is a gaff. Some say they don't need a gaff. They feel a tight pair of panties or briefs is all that's needed. This may be so in jeans or regular slacks, but with tight leggings you will have an unfeminine bulge.

I have worn various gaffs throughout the years with varying degrees of effectiveness and I have just tried a new creation from Fashion Fantasy in Manassas, Virginia. Their gaff is made of a fine mesh spandex fabric. I was skeptical at first since, as I said, spandex has a tendency to conform to bumps rather than smooth them out.

I was in a rush to get dressed the night I tried out this gaff. That may account for the fact that during a ladies room stop later, I realized I had put the gaff on backwards. This particular gaff is a thong type and I had got the thinner part with the label in the front. It is quite wide for a thong

(the crotch is three and a half inches wide) and the only problem with wearing it reversed is too much fabric on my tush. I am a long-time thong fan, so the feel of extra fabric on my cheeks was unpleasant. This feeling was alleviated by scrunching the fabric together. This gave the added effect of pushing my cheeks out making for a fuller looking fanny.

When I got home I took a look at the directions that come with the gaff and, right there in black and white, the company states that some customers do wear them backwards. I had not pulled a "gaff" with my gaff after all. Wearing the Fashion Fantasy gaff either way made for a very smooth crotch. The spandex mesh kept everything flat and the extra width kept "things" from spilling around the edges. I will wear it again under spandex pants and other revealing looks.

Disadvantages? There were two that I noted. First, the waist sizing seems to run small. I wore a Medium and the waistband (spandex) was tight. Not uncomfortably so, but tight enough that after more than a few hours it might become so. I would order a Large or Extra-Large unless you really are petite. Even then, anyone with a very large waist may have trouble. Second, the directions that come with the gaff are not much use if you've never worn a gaff or tucked before. "Put both testicles up into abdominal cavity" is the kind of direction that might cause some novices to injure themselves. It took me a long time to find those two little pockets that are custom made for testicle tucking. Perhaps a diagram with the directions would be a good idea.

(JoAnn Roberts, The Shopping Maven, adds: I was the original test-driver for this product, but I found it too tight for my waist even though it really did smooth out the tummy and crotch. So, I thought Angela, who is two dress sizes smaller than I am, would be a better tester.)

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**Cross-Talk?**

## PASSING? YES? NO?

by Corine Klewer

**S**urely you have all read as many articles as I have in other publications as well as ours concerning the nebulous topic of "passing" in public. I am no expert by any means, but there are certain repetitive ideas and suggestions that appear to be common to many of these articles which I'm going to try to highlight.

There are always references at meetings or other get-togethers as to how well this sister or that sister can "pass". There have also been times when someone has said to that sister, "You're so lucky, you can pass anywhere!" Yet, that sister may have doubts as to her ability to be successful in public. This is not an unusual occurrence as many members of our community have those doubts and fears.

Going out in public -- now there is a scary thought, isn't it? Or is it? A myriad of negative thoughts can flood one's mind immediately at the mention of venturing out among "regular" people. This really implies that we aren't

"regular" people. Now we all know that is a lie, don't we! Yes, we are a little different, but that doesn't mean that we do not have a place among the "regular" people! We are constructive members of society, we contribute positively to the economy, and many of us have families with "regular" responsibilities both to our families and our careers.

So why don't we want to have the same opportunities regardless of the gender we desire to express? Actually, we do want to have those same opportunities, but in many cases those thoughts and ideas exist as our fantasies. I know they did with me for countless years -- getting all dressed up, dreaming of getting into the car and going shopping, or to a movie, or out to eat, but inevitably, not venturing further than the living room or the closet mirror. Sometimes, maybe we do venture out in our cars and drive to the places that we want to go, but then can't get our legs to move because the adrenalin is pumping through our bodies at unprecedented levels causing complete paralysis! Ever get that feeling? I have, many times! Again, the negative thoughts raise their ugly heads -- thoughts like "I am going to be read"; "Someone will recognize me"; "Someone will recognize my vehicle"; "I will be hassled unmercifully, so much so that I'll want to crawl into a hole and pull the dirt over me". There are so many negative thoughts that occur to us, aren't there? A million and one reasons why we don't pursue our dreams, our "wouldn't it be wonderful if..." It really doesn't matter at what level we are when we have these thoughts -- whether we have been out before or not, or just wanting to attend a club meeting or function. Obviously, if you only dress partially, this is not a concern,

but as soon as we start experimenting with dressing fully, **there they are!**

Most of the articles that we have read really concern our mental outlook; our view of ourselves; our **perception**. The mirror only shows a two-dimensional view of our physical appearance, and shows none of our mental appearance, our inner feelings, or our essence! This really is the boggle point. Although our physical appearance may be acceptable, we are completely unprepared mentally or psychologically.

The articles place a lot of emphasis on confidence -- yet how can we build that confidence to an acceptable level and recognizable level? Good question, and not easily answerable! Confidence can be such a fragile thing and also easily destroyed. In talking with some members at different times, I know that they have been told "You'll have no trouble passing." Yet, when they did attempt to mingle publicly, they were "read" right off the bat, dashing

**Going out in public -- now there's a scary thought. Or is it?**

what confidence existed and creating an intolerable level of anxiety resulting in an uncontrollable urge to run, hide and disappear back into the dark safety of our small closets, never to be seen or heard from again.

So the question of confidence and building that confidence still remains. It is not a question of who knows of your crossdressing and who doesn't. We are just referring to the confidence level of your feminine image. Before any major undertaking, appropriate preparation has always been a key to the success of that undertaking. It doesn't matter whether the project is business or pleasure related, proper preparation provides the edge -- the level of confidence necessary for the probability of success. If you did not prepare for some sort of exam, your expectation for an acceptable, successful result is diminished. If you did not prepare for that business presentation, the expectation for a successful result is lessened. Most times, winging it doesn't breed success. So it really doesn't matter what the project or undertaking is, the greater the preparation, the greater the expectation for success. Should venturing out in our feminine persona be any different? I think not.

If the concept of preparation is such a key factor, what then are the appropriate steps of preparation for a public appearance?

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Well, everyone is different -- what works for one may not work for someone else. (What a non-committal statement that is!) The fact remains that more emphasis must be placed on mental and psychological attitude than physical appearance. Of course physical appearance is important, but have you ever noticed how many women pay so little attention to their physical appearance? It doesn't affect them being perceived as women, even the ones with some very prominent masculine features. Why? Simply because their gender mindset is already there. They would have a problem seeming like or acting like a male. If they have to take on masculine traits, for business purposes, for example, they must also "prepare" in order to be successful. So our feminine mindset should be firmly established through preparation.

So then, what must comprise the preparation necessary to enjoy a reasonable feeling of success? Actually, the physical appearance is the easiest part (as long as you don't move). Usually, with practice and experimentation, we can be somewhat adept at applying makeup. However, the trick is to develop the techniques that are acceptable for the time of day or night and the situation or places you want to go. We definitely need to give more thought to "blending in" with the surroundings. Unfortunately, in order to do that, many time we are forced to wear clothes that are not necessarily "sexy" enough to meet our usual fantasy standards. In other words, we really will not blend too well by going to the mall "dressed to the nines" or wearing an outfit not

reflective of our age or situation. If freedom of movement and blending are to be realized, then we shouldn't be wearing attention deserving apparel. Generally, people do not go to malls or anywhere else for that matter, to look for crossdressers. They came for a purpose and usually keep focused on their intent. But if we show up wearing a slick dress and 4" heels or are 35+ and wearing a micro-miniskirt with heels, we are just asking to be noticed, read and hassled! Conservatism is a better route for blending -- even to the point of wearing items that we feel are the least flattering, like pants (yuck), flat shoes (double yuck), shirt, blouse or sweatshirt, with little in the way of flashy makeup (major yuck). Think about it! If you are planning to go shopping in the evening, most women have had the time to go home and **change** into something more comfortable. You can dress a little more (skirt, blouse, suit, hose and reasonable heel's if you plan to shop at lunchtime or from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Your makeup should be somewhat subdued from your usual nighttime compliment. Usually for daytime, everything is less, less, and less!

Now that you have your outfit and makeup chosen so as to avoid a lot of attention, the "real" preparation must begin. You must not only look feminine but you must "be" feminine. You cannot be afraid to project your feminine essence. It obviously will enhance the perception that others will have of you.

If you perceive yourself as a "man in a dress" (or other feminine attire), then that is the way others will perceive you -- obviously not a confidence builder. If you think of yourself and perceive yourself to be a woman, then others will perceive you in that light. Again, I'm not talking about your image in the mirror, but referring to how you act and how you think of yourself. Actions, like the way you walk, stand, swing your arms, carry your purse, the position of your hands, head, back, eyes, body movements and gestures, -- all these and many more facets demonstrate the essence of femininity.

As stated before, women do this automatically because that's all they know. We must think about what we are doing all the time, until it becomes familiar from practice, practice, practice. This is how we gain confidence. To effect a feminine image, we must be confident in our femininity. Because many of the mannerisms, body movements and postures are foreign to us, it is extremely easy for us to over-exaggerate them. This can be just a revealing as not paying attention to them at all. Don't forget, women are built differently than we are. There are many subtle differences (not to mention the major ones) as to the way their parts are attached, especially with regard to muscular attachment. Women's arms hang slightly different, their hands are more curved or rounded, their hips are broader causing them to walk differently -- I know you get the picture. It's a lot harder for us to master a good representation of a woman's movement without a

concerted effort. We have to practice and prepare until some of these things become an automatic part of our feminine persona. No matter how good our physical presentation is, if we clump around in public in our usual longer stride and style, we'll be spotted immediately. If our arms and hands are in our usual carrying position, elbows more severely bent and pointing outward, there will be something wrong with the picture. If we walk slumped over with round shoulder, and our heads looking at the ground, instead of shoulders back, head up, back straight, something will appear amiss and it won't be a **Miss, a Ms., or a Mrs.**

Even moderate success in public involves a reasonable emulation, both mentally and physically. There are indeed other obstacles that must be viewed as the general public would perceive them. Yes, unfortunately, all of our very tall girls have a distinct disadvantage, because no matter what size heel your wear, you will stick out like the proverbial sore thumb. You can't help but draw attention to yourself, just from the sheer elevation. Blending is tough (if not impossible) but, you can still be perceived as a believable representation if you give proper attention to preparation and mental attitude.

How many of us have spent an appropriate amount of ongoing time observing women in all types of situations? Not just looking at them, but detailed observation? Does it get boring? -- only if you let it! How effective is that exercise really? It depends on how closely you observe and how detailed your analysis is. Does it really work? You bet it does! But you will only present as good an

image as your research allows. Go for the real life study rather than an over-dramatized television performance observation. Try to choose your research subjects so that they are of similar height, weight and age as yourself. You'll learn even more.

If you want to present an acceptable public image, you must spend the time necessary for "preparation" through research, keen observation and practice before making that public appearance. If you take an "I don't care" attitude, then be prepared for the most likely consequences. We are not speaking here of the "I don't care attitude" or the "accept me as I am" attitude. We are talking about presenting our feminine essence in an appropriate, believable manner to successfully express our true and deep feelings of femininity.

Being good at anything takes time, effort and practice. There are no substitutes! There are very few of us that will "pass" all the time. There are a lot of us that can enjoy some success publicly if we do our homework, practice, avoid the "outrageous" and properly prepare. Anything worth doing, is worth doing well. Confidence is always at its maximum when properly prepared to "be the best woman you can be".

These are simply my views and reactions to many articles and my personal experience. Thank you for your patience.

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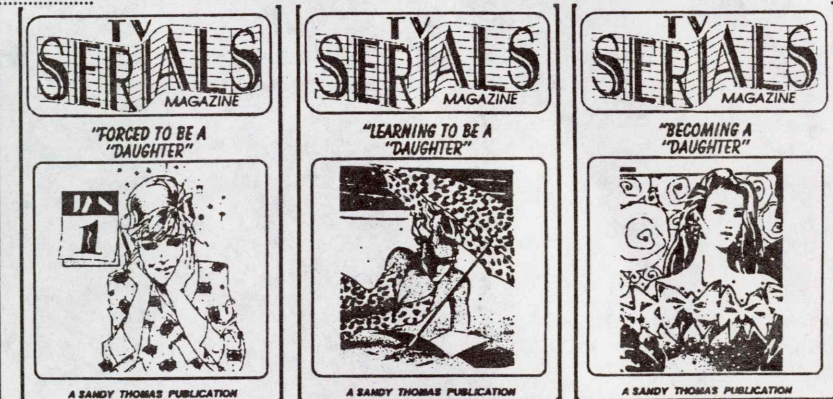
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