



The Femme Forum



MAY 1971

VOLUME ONE - NUMBER THIRTY

Spring is budding out all over. It's a lovely time of the year for nature, and a kind of "rebirth" time of year for man as well. If humans could shed the doldrums of winter as well as nature does, it would be a happier life. But we humans must congru-up our own feeling of a fresh start each year in a psychological sense. However, I can think of no better time to break the shackles of the cold months and generate some new thoughts toward enriching our lives and enhancing our feeling of well-being. After all, this is kind of like being re-born and growing some new buds, if you will. Perhaps for FP's we should just go out and buy a new outfit or two or But I think refreshing our minds a bit can be even more important for us and we should begin by counting our blessings. We have all come so very far these past few years, a distance not easily traveled without the help of each other and not without leadership and the pioneers who have shown us the way through F.P.E. Much has been done for us and in a real sense, all we have to do is take advantage of it. By this I mean that we can all continue to grow in a personal sense because the pathways have been established. There should be more order within ourselves and certainly more direction toward inner peace and personal development than any of us knew just a few years ago. Let this month be our "Intra-Springtime" then. Let us all become recharged and blossom toward a fuller and happier total life, because this is what FPE is all about.

SOME RULES TO REMEMBER ! ! ! By Fran 49 C-1, Executive Secretary

Last year we published the New Member Guideline which was distributed to those who came into FPE within a year and is now sent out in the new member material. It seemed that with this guideline distributed, our security rules would be clear and understandable. Well, they are, but we forgot one important element of our membership; the older members. By older we mean the people that have been in FPE for more than two years. Thus, some problems have come up that need going into and we have no other place to go into them except the Femme Forum.

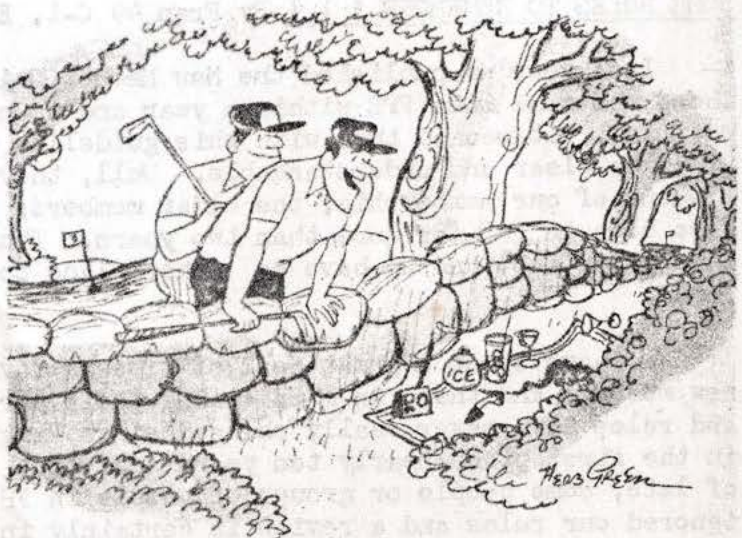
We have spent a great deal of time in developing our process of screening new members and then, in maintaining their personal security. These processes and rules have never really changed since Virginia conceived the idea of FPE in the first place nearly ten years ago. But over the years, and especially of late, some people or groups of people in FPE have stretched, bent or nearly ignored our rules and a review is certainly in order. So let's take security and membership a step at a time for the purpose of making official policy clear once again.

A new applicant must purchase at least five issues of TVia magazine in order to obtain an application for FPE membership. When completing the application, honesty is required in telling about TV desires, history of FP development and the application must be signed by the applicants real name and the applicants actual home address must be given. The signature and address follow a lengthy but most important statement and pledge of security. The pledge consists of statements promising to assist other members where possible, contribute to maintenance of FPE and to maintain, no matter what personal risk, all information about other members. The pledge also states that the member will not seek information about other members, but if given such information freely by a member, will guard this information as if it were her own and never give it to a third party. All personal information must be given freely by the member involved, and if such information as real name, address, occupation, etc., is not given out, this anonymity is always to be respected. We have had some serious breakdowns in this area and must stress again that what other people do or where they live is no one else's business. As long as a mailing address and a femme name are provided, this is sufficient to establish identity in FPE outside of the application. Our Interviewers have the right to probe a bit into history and development, but not in the areas mentioned above.

When the application is received by Virginia it is either approved, rejected or postponed pending further information. Once it is approved, it is sent to the Executive Secretary for approval, rejection or postponement. If approved, and as soon as dues and initiation fees are paid, the applicant becomes a Provisionary Member with all rights except to meet other members. The address of the nearest Interviewer is given to the new member and she is asked to contact the Interviewer to arrange for a personal interview at a time and place convenient to the Interviewer. Up to this point, no one has any information about the Provisional Member except the President and Executive Secretary. The application then goes into a safety deposit box and stays there for the protection of the new member.

When an interview can be arranged, the Interviewer is asked to pass final judgement on the new member regarding her suitability to meet others, report any serious doubts back to the President of FPE, or give approval for full membership and present the FPE membership card.

At this point, the new member either remains on a Provisional status or becomes a full member of FPE. If full membership is granted the member is automatically eligible for participation in any chapter activity that takes place, such as official meetings. If dues are required for chapter membership they must be paid, but no other requirements are to be established by chapter officials. Thus a new full member is automatically a member of a local chapter when she is approved by the Interviewer. Now this is where the majority of misunderstanding comes in. Additional rules have been



"Must be a TV outing!"

established by local chapters which are not part of the membership process and will not be tolerated by the national office. Each chapter has a right to maintain its own security, but not at the risk of a new, fully approved member meeting a lot of additional and unnecessary steps. However, if a member of FPE ever breaks any security rules as stated above or becomes a security risk in the opinion of the majority of the members of a chapter, that chapter has the right to terminate or suspend chapter membership, but must report its action to the national officers for investigation. Action as to FPE membership will then be taken after fair appraisal has been reached.

Let's hope that this detailed explanation of rules regarding both national and local FPE membership is now clear once and for all. The reasoning behind all of this should be obvious to all; after a member has gone through all of the steps listed above, she has a right to participate in local activities and should not be subjected to whims or the fancy of anyone else along the way. She is qualified and approved and "in", but if she breaks the rules, she is "out".

Our Interviewers have a very big responsibility in that they must use empathy and understanding, not judging whether the new member will make a good personal friend or be a knockout when dressed, to determine if the Provisional Member has been honest about being a true TV and aspiring FP. The Interviewer must also make the final decision as to whether the new member will be a good "citizen" of FPE and if so, she should try to introduce her to the chapter or see that she gets in contact with the proper chapter people. After all of this, the new member deserves to attend and become a part of the local group. On this issue we must take a stand and ask for your full cooperation!

The other big problem that keeps coming up is chapter meetings. Here the official national policy has always been clear, yet constant violations are reported. First let us say, or I should say repeat, that it is most desirable to hold chapter meetings in a public place or where everyone who is qualified can attend. A private home is not the best place for a meeting because it places the Hostess in a compromising position to select who she wants in her home. Private parties or small social gatherings are one thing, but official chapter meetings which should be held at least three or four times a year, if not more regularly, must be open to all full FPE members who live within the region. If a member has met all of the above steps, she is entitled to participate in meetings unless she is clearly a security risk.



We must also stress once again that non-members or disqualified members should never be present at any chapter meeting. This simply means that if someone present does not have a current membership card and an application on file with FPE, she or he are not members. The only exception to this rule are wives of current members or professional guests approved for attendance by a majority of the chapter members. Why in the world you people want to expose your own security and that of other FPE members by inviting someone who has not taken the same steps as you have is beyond me. Our system for screening new members is well-thought

"Is this your picture, Mr. Grimes?"

out and works well until someone on a local level decides to forget the rules and expose everyone around her by having one or more non-members present. This is a direct and in most cases flagrant breach of security and reason enough to be expelled from FPE. In the final analysis, it seems that FPE and its leaders must spend a great amount of time protecting its members from what should be clear risks of security because of carelessness or just plain stupidity.

We are well aware that there are many other underground or just plain open processes for getting names and corresponding with probable TVs?????, but this is not our bag nor do we need this type to membership acquisition. We have harped on this for years because most of the problems we have had in the past with security were with those who never were FP's in the first place or with those who feel they must be over liberal in finding supposed TV friends. If you feel that the correspondence clubs or other non-FPE means are the way you want to travel, that is your business, but we must then ask you to leave FPE and leave our members alone. I cannot see why our rules, which are for your own protection, cannot be followed to the letter; they are not complicated and benefit all of us. So....we must ask once again for your full cooperation and will stand ready to police our organization to the best of our ability to maintain common sense and the well-being of our members. Thank you for reading this carefully and understanding what is being said here.

NEW MEMBERS ENROLLED

We are pleased to announce the qualification of several new members this time. Let's hope these ladies enjoy their FPE membership and find many new friends.

<u>Region</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Zone</u>
60	Patti	21 Y-1	016
70	Diahann	30 B-5	070
70	Lois	30 H-3	080
100	Jennie	32 L-5	118
135	Kathy	32 Z-3	115
210	Jeanette	51 B-1	200
210	Lily	20 T-2	212
210	Jeanne	20 B-3	216
253	Joan	48 K-1	261
330	Stella	9 L-4	330
330	Mary	52 M-1	Guam
480	Vickie	22 C-6	480
*550	Shirley	23 A-1	550
740	Joy	36 H-1	741
900	Lorraine	5 K-11	913
900	Wanda	5 H-27	902
900	Virginia	28 P-1	897

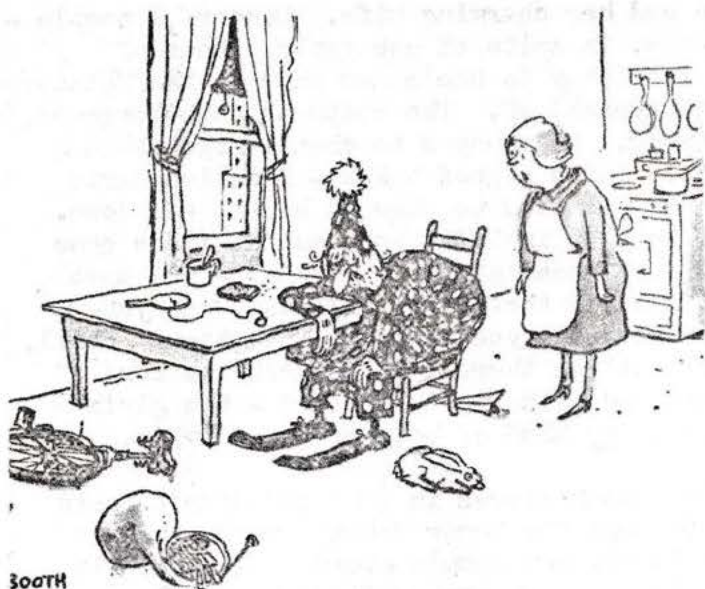
* Reinstated



"Dear, what does 'From the TS gang' mean?"

NEW INTERVIEWERS ANNOUNCED

We have made some changes in our Interviewer system and also appointed some additional Interviewers within the past month or two. First of all, Mary 38 F-2 has agreed to handle things for us in the Philadelphia area which is Region 190.



300TH

So the members who have not been able to obtain an interview in this region should drop a line to Mary. We have designated a new region to cover the western part of West Virginia. This will be known as Region 253 and will be covered by Betty Lynn 48 B-1. Up in Minnesota, Sally 23 W-1 has retired and Myrtle Ann 36 M-1 will take over the Interviewing duties. And way over in Italy, Mara FE-C-3 has been appointed to take care of her country. We wish the very best of luck to these ladies and extend our appreciation for their efforts on behalf of FPE.

"Now stop this silly man stuff and be an FP again!"

NEW CHAPTER CHARTERED

The girls in Oklahoma (Region 740) have formed an official chapter to be known as Omega. There are five charter members and with the addition of Joy 36 H-1 these ladies should develop quite fast. The charters include: Clare 36 F-1, Louise 36 P-1, Nancy 36 B-1, Joy 36 G-1 and Myrtle Ann 36 M-1 who travels from Minnesota every few weeks. Good luck gals in 740.

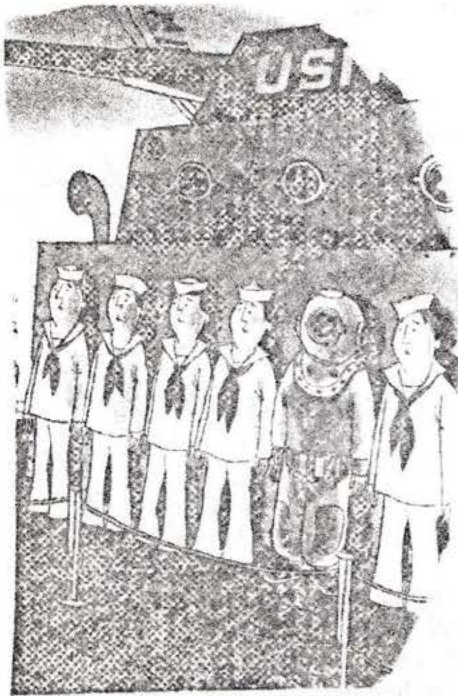
SHEILA IN MIRROR-LAND

The mails were slow and this arrived too late for the March Femme Forum, but it brings you up-to-date on England and the Beaumont Society, so is worth printing now. While the rest of you were getting ready to whoop it up on New Year's Eve, Avis and I decided to cut in ahead of you, and flew to London Dec. 30th to get a six-hour lead. Well, it worked out fine except for one detail - about 10:30 P.M. we were stricken by time-zone shock (that's when your insides are on Eastern Standard and your outsides on European Daylight Time), and collapsed into bed. I woke up as planned at 11:50 P.M., being the kind of cuckoo that has a clock in me, and we debated very briefly whether to go out in the 20°F weather. Instead we turned on the radio and heard Big Ben strike the hour that way, just as we would have at home. All we missed was the sight of the "skinheads" throwing hippies into the fountain at Trafalgar Square; we caught our colds a few days later in a much more prosaic manner.

Sylvia was up that weekend and introduced us to Margaret Elizabeth, chairlady of the Representatives Committee (that's sort of my counterpart in the Beaumont Society). She is not only charming but an extremely efficient organizer. Both Avis and I were tremendously impressed with the growth of Beaumont since our last visit less than a year before; they now have about half as many members as FPE! This doesn't count FPE-NE, of course; Sylvia has visited Copenhagen and reported they are growing almost as fast, so if we don't sharpen up, we just might end up as number three in the race. Can England and Scandinavia really beat all the rest of the world? Of course, Beaumont has jurisdiction over Africa now, but most of those cats don't wear anything!

Sylvia also took us to meet Jackie and her charming wife. Wonderful people - amazing how quickly we are all old friends, in spite of geography. None of them wanted to join us when we went to see Danny La Rue's new show at the Palace; really he doesn't quite go over with the typical FP. The costumes were gorgeous, all \$24,000 worth of them, and so was Danny. He managed to change wigs about six times, and most of them were upswept! Quite a good trick - I called Marie in New York as soon as we got home and she promised to show me how it was done. The thing about Danny that turns us off is that in EVERY sentence he finds some way to remind the audience that he is a MALE under all that glamour - and some of the ways are far from lady-like. I've heard that he is bisexual, and you just don't realize how far they are from us until you hear one in action. Still, it was a good show, and cheap except for getting there. If you can't afford the fare, just cobble up a Pan-Am uniform and walk right on board - the girls are so harried and confused they'd welcome any kind of help on those 747's.

Naturally, I took a tour of the dirty book stores in Soho and didn't spend a shilling; there was nothing about us (except for Roger Baker's book "Drag" and only one copy of that). Which reminds me, you should avoid 42nd street in New York - it doesn't have anything new in the book stores, and the people on the sidewalk are becoming more unsavory every day.



One day I picked up a copy of "Mayfair" magazine, a sort of Playboy type of publication not normally seen outside Britain. It had a preview of a Swiss movie I do hope gets over here, called "The Sexy Dozen", about a boy who enrolls as a girl at a finishing school in the Alps so he can be with his girl-friend, whose mother has sent her there to separate them. He passes, despite close scrapes with an amorous male teacher and a Lesbian school-mate, for a whole term before the other girls wise up. This is not due to any lack of heterosexual drive, which he demonstrates with his Barbara in full, living color "on camera" at every possible opportunity, but because he is utterly faithful to her and also because he makes a darn good-looking girl. Judging by the stills, you'll have to look closely to see which one is him in the group shots. According to the story, this is his first adventure in dresses, but nobody could do that well without some previous practice.

And now for the news from TV land.....

"There is a TV on every ship." First a word of apology to those of you who did send me news for this column last month. I held off writing, hoping for more news and then when it was finally typed, it reached Fran too late, since she had an early deadline. To the rest of you who forgot to send it in, unless we hear from you, we can't include your activities.

Rho - New officers elected in January were Jeanette 20 R-2 President, Irene 20 R-1 Vice-President and Jeannie 20 R-4 Secretary-Treasurer. They meet regularly in the Washington-Baltimore area with a nucleus of six members and a number of prospects. April 16-18th they had a three-day outing in the mountains, a repeat of one they had a year and a half ago. We were sorry not to have been able to attend, for it sounded like great fun.

Delta - A staff writer for the Akron Beacon Journal was invited to the January meeting as part of their public relations work. Maryann sent a copy of his write-up and it is most sympathetic and understanding. They had briefed him well beforehand and given him literature to read, so he was prepared for his discussion with the members. They have invited Alan Douglas and his producer to a future meeting (Virginia was on his show when she was there in February.)

Texas - Iota plans their THIRD ANNUAL RESORT August 28 to September 4 and expects it to be bigger and better than ever. Since they now have about 16 members in the Houston area, they are considering renting two houses and need to know how many of the rest of you plan to attend. As you may remember, all FPE members who are interested are most welcome. The houses are on a beach in Galveston and it is a week of fun, relaxation and companionship. The cost for bed and board is about \$45.00 and if you want to attend, you must make a firm reservation with Sally Scott before June 15th. Write her in care of Fran if you don't have her address.

Lambda - Lambda now has a newsletter with make-up suggestions and personal experiences as well as notice of coming meetings. March 13th they had a dinner meeting at a restaurant in Portland. The director of a modeling school was the special speaker and I can visualize the members practicing what she told them at every opportunity. A meeting has been announced for May 22nd in Seattle.

Denver - Sigma girls arranged for Virginia's seminar at the University of Colorado School of Psychiatry on February 22nd and it was very well received. Maureen taped the session for the benefit of those who were not able to attend. They held their regular chapter meeting in Virginia's motel room the night before.

Kansas City - Eta Chapter met in January at Carol Ann's new apartment for a housewarming. They are locating places where they are welcome to go when dressed and now have two wig styling salons in this category. They have been looking into the legal aspects of dressing in the area and found that Kansas City is one of the most liberal cities in the Midwest.

Tau - Myrtle Ann appeared on a talk show February 27th on station WLOL Minneapolis. A great success for it went on for three hours and there is to be a repeat at some future time. Their monthly meetings have been well attended - they start any time after 1:30 and last on into the night, which seems to fit almost everyone's schedules. Sally has resigned as Counselor due to press of brother's business and Myrtle Ann will take over as Interviewer.

Gamma - Dot had her turn on the public speaking circuit too. spoke to an evening meeting of the Homophile Union of Boston on Transvestism as we know it and judging by the questions afterward, she was a great success. Some asked for the FPE California address; others complimented her on a fine presentation; all learned something.



"Robert, is that a bra you have on?"

TO BE A GIRL - Poem by Susan [redacted] 46 A-1

To be a girl
is ecstasy
There is no other word
that can describe the lovely state
of femininity
That man may know
in heels and hose
and frothy lingerie

To feel the urge
to switch one's role
to girl - and not be male
No greater thrill
can be enjoyed
this thing I know is real
To be perfumed, wear whispering silks
against my skin
to know an earring's touch
a flashing ring
a girdle's cling
and make-up for my face
These things must be
because I need
to know the wondrous grace
of feminine joys
that only boys
like me can ever taste

Reserved for me
by Heav'n, I guess
is love for a flirty hem
against a leg
encased in silk
I'm me - no longer him!
So, God, I pray
on every day
to not be him
but just to be all girl
and love the touch
against my breast
a bra's embrace bestows
I only ask
to be adorned
(for days on end!)
in frills and furbelows

The boy that's me
will ever feel
a wondrous touch of awe
at changes wrought
within his soul
by touch of filmy lace
With women's gifts
all curves and grace
I'm girl - the me that's me!
With make-up fair
and flowing hair
God grants me ecstasy

Why can't I always be a girl?
The thought is wonderful
I'd never ask for more
than just to have
a chance each day
to do what I implore
my God to do
I beg Him to
just make me girl - not more

I ask too much?
Oh yes, I know
but I will always pray
in hopes that I
before I die
can be a lovely girl
for all the world
to see and love
Oh, just to be a girl!

LITERARY REPORT - By Jeri 49 K-3

After several months dry spell, several new things have popped up in the press of interest to TVs. The first is the reprinting by Grove Press of Gynecocracy, one of the old classics from the Victorian era, and very much of a style and theme as Miss High Heels, but a lot dirtier. That is, the sexual activity is much more explicitly delineated, perhaps depressingly so.

A wholly different type of book is the Golden Age Capers by Robert Carson that is fascinating for a number of reasons. First, the main theme is about a group of retirees who have never made a howling success out of life and after a jointly planned, rather cold-blooded assassination of a sadistic laboratory animal dealer, they embark on a life of crime reminiscent of televisions' The Rogues, or perhaps Ocean's Eleven. They employ costumes in profusion since one of their number is a former Hollywood make-up artist who usually takes part in the crimes dressed as a young girl. The climactic episode involves the kidnapping of a long-haired

rock and roll star who they keep drugged and dressed as a girl as well. Complications develop when it turns out the kidnapee is a TV as well and has himself a ball. Not quite the denouement of the "Ransom of Red Chief", but close. I recommend it highly.

Another book The Ravishers, by (Miss) Merle [redacted] (Bantam PB #Q5982, \$1.25) seems much of the Levin-Robbins bag, but with an important difference. There are four episodes held together by a slim framework that involves four playboy types who, in a post-coital summit conference invent a contest involving making it in the most imaginative spots conceivable. The first involves the President's bedroom (in Washington), the second, and the really fascinating one, is the ladies room at Grand Central Station. Naturally, the hero has to adopt a disguise, but it quickly develops that the disguise has greater implications. It's really hard to summarize, for it is one of the most detailed, closely-written stories I have seen on the subject. Read it!

SPECIAL ARTICLE ATTACHED

We are printing an article entitled "Clothing and Sexuality" and attaching it to this newsletter. We hope it will prove interesting to you. It seems that really very little has been written about "clothing" in a historical sense, so this article should be helpful to have around as an educational vehicle for non-FPs. etc. We hope you will consider it an effective contribution to your libraries.

LAST CALL FOR DUES

Boy, am I sick of hearing that one. Believe it or not, some dues money is still dribbling in, but time is growing short. Immediately after I get this issue to press, I will start making up the annual report and annual roster of members. We still have 117 members who haven't paid their dues for 1971 or haven't let us know their intentions. The funny thing is that a lot of these "non-pays" are attending meetings and enjoying FPE to the fullest. But the fact remains that these people are not current FPE members and are "out" as far as FPE is concerned. If you happen to know of one of the rather careless gals, please let her know she can still be a part of FPE if she would only send us her dues for this year. Thanks!

Well, dears...that's about all the nagging for this time and hopefully forever. The next publication you will get from FPE will be the Annual Report in July. So we wish you a pleasant Summer. When you are having your picture taken in your teeny bikini this summer, be careful of an over exposure. So take care and have fun.



"Are there any FP's living here?"

Femininely,

Fran 49 C-1
Executive Secretary

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CLOTHING AND SEXUALITY

By

Una Stannard, Ph.D.

That women wear skirts and men trousers has as much to do with sexuality as pink and blue booties. It is a custom, an expression of orthodoxy, not reason.

Most people, naturally, disagree. For them, apportioning the bifurcated garment to the male and the unbifurcated to the female makes anatomical sense: it is a function of the different positions of male and female organs or urination and generation. For since a woman urinates sitting, oughtn't she to have a garment that pulls up? And since a man urinates standing, oughtn't he to have a garment that lets him do so? Furthermore, skirts give direct access to the vagina, and the fly to the penis. Even more fundamental, it is the woman who gets pregnant, so it is the woman who needs a garment that hangs from the shoulders. Hence, anatomy destined the man for trousers and women for skirts.

Or did it? Men have no natural waistline, so wouldn't a garment that hangs from the shoulders be more suitable than trousers which require belts and braces to keep up? And wouldn't such a garment be even more appropriate in middle age when men tend to develop protuberant bellies? Moreover, a fly may be a necessary corollary of the penis, but why trousers? Why need a male wear material wrapped around each leg? Wouldn't a skirt with a fly satisfy all needs of male anatomy? For that matter, why does a man need a fly? Since the invention of the zipper, the fly does give quick access to the penis, but how much more convenient is it to unzip a zipper and disentangle the penis from the shorts than to draw aside a toga? Convenient or inconvenient, for centuries men did without a fly. For centuries men wore skirts.

The skirt preceded trousers as a garment. Trousers were originally a skirt, part of which was drawn between the legs. In mankind's early history trousers were much rarer than skirts, and when trousers did occur they were by no means exclusively a male garment. Among the Eskimos and Persians trousers were and are still worn by both sexes, and Chinese women have always had the option of wearing them. But for centuries skirts were the most common garment for both sexes. The loin cloth is a primitive skirt, seen in an elaborate form in the Egyptian pleated apron. Turks wore caftans, Greeks chitons, Romans togas, Japanese kimonos, Malaysians sarongs. Roman soldiers fought in short skirts; even their armor had a metal petalled skirt attached to the shield. Medieval men fought in long tunics of ringed metal, Scots in kilts, and Greeks in short full skirts.

When the German barbarians invaded Italy, they were wearing trousers, and for a short while trousers influenced male dress. Roman soldiers adopted them for fighting, and a fair number of Roman citizens must have started wearing them because in 397 and 399 A.D. ordinances were passed forbidding the wearing of trousers in Rome. But trousers did not become fashionable; they connoted barbarism. In 800 A.D. when Charlemagne visited Rome, the Pope refused to grant him an audience until he took off his trousers and put on a dress, the long Byzantine tunic that men of importance then wore.

The long straight tunic or gown became the dress for all classes and the barbaric trousers of the Germans disappeared beneath, eventually getting briefer and briefer until trousers became underwear. When, as the centuries passed, the tunic itself got shorter and shorter, trousers had to be reinvented. They were not constructed like the earlier trousers, which were similar to our own; they were tights, a development from long hose. Men of the 15th century in their tights and short tunics look like modern women in pantyhose and miniskirts. But not all skirts were worn so short. In portraits of Henry VIII his skirts reach almost to the knee, and the long gown was still a respectable garment and much worn by older men and all men in cold weather.

The new tights never developed into trousers; rather the upper part (called breeches) developed skirt-like characteristics. Trunk hose, which was worn by men in the late 16th and 17th centuries, were tights, the top of which was belled out by many yards of material or by stuffing until they resembled huge pumpkins. Trunk hose became so full that the seats of Parliament had to be widened to accommodate them. It was as if the men of the period were trying to imitate the farther-*ingale*, the hip-expanding skirt worn by Elizabethan women.

Trunk hose became breeches, but breeches that look to us more like skirts than trousers. They were full and baggy, often drooping in great folds below the knee. Between 1660 and 1670 petticoat breeches were fashionable. They were an extremely full divided skirt that reached to the knee and hung loose. A ruffle, an additional little skirt, was worn around each calf. Petticoat breeches were superseded by an A-line coat dress that buttoned down the front and reached below the knee, completely hiding the breeches worn underneath. To a modern eye, men look as if they are wearing dresses, with stockings covering the exposed leg.

In the first half of the 18th century, men's breeches were still concealed by two skirts - the long waistcoat and long outer coat worn on top. Since the skirts of the coats were stiffened by paper or wire so they protruded from the hips, once again men's skirts resembled the hooped skirts worn by contemporary women.

It was not until the second half of the 18th century that men began to give up skirts. About 1760 waistcoats began to be cut shorter, then the front part of the skirt of the outer coat was cut away, revealing the knee breeches, which gradually were replaced by loose trousers. Yet even when trousers were established as the proper lower garment for men, skirts were not wholly given up. The frock coat, a knee length skirted coat, was introduced early in the 19th century and was worn by gentlemen into the 20th century. Nor did men begin to give up nightgowns until the 1880's, when pajamas were introduced. And throughout most of the 19th century a boy's first garment was a frock, which was worn until he was 2 or 3. In earlier centuries he would have worn his frock until he was 7 or so. Since children's clothes were often fossilizations of clothes worn by adults at an earlier period, the fact that little boys were wearing dresses until late in the 19th century is strong evidence of the skirt's primacy as a male garment. The jacket that men still insist on wearing over their trousers is an "ascendant" of the gown all men wore, just as the "tails" men still wear on formal occasions are a sort of clothing coccyx, a remnant of their former skirts.

Men not only wore skirts for much of history, they also indulged in other articles of dress that are now considered feminine. Men loved jewelry. Roman senators sometimes wore as many as six rings to a finger, and Henry VIII owned 234 rings and 324 brooches. Just before Charles I was beheaded, he removed a pearl earring from his left ear and presented it to a friend. The single male earring had been fashionable for centuries. Men also used to love lace. Charles I once bought 1000 yards of lace to trim twelve shirts. Flounces of lace flopped from the tops of Cavalier's boots, and lace roses decorated men's shoes and lace ruffles their wrists. Petticoat breeches were trimmed with from 72 to 250 yards of ribbon per pair. Men were as interested in clothes as women, owned as many if not more than women, and had them made of the same silks and brocades and in brilliant colors too.

Not only is there a long history of the male use of cosmetics and perfume, high heels seem to have been a male invention, having originally been developed to keep the foot more securely in the stirrup. But what started as utility became vanity. Men, like women, wore high heels periodically throughout history, and in the 18th century men's heels were generally higher than women's and were a bright red. Men also invented a pointed toe shoe. In the 14th and 15th centuries men (not women) wore shoes with pointed toes which became so long-up to 2 feet-that in order to walk, the toe of the shoe had to be chained to the man's knee.

Until recently men were as concerned as women with their hair. Ancient Greeks set their hair in curls and dyed it blond. Early Britons dyed their moustaches green or blue. Elizabethan men used to spend hours at the barber having their hair set in the Italian, Spanish, or French manner, either curled in a half-moon, or with two long curls at the ears, or with a single lovelock. In the 17th and 18th centuries men improved more radically on nature by wearing long curled and powdered wigs, which no gentleman would be seen without. Throughout most of the 19th century, because men still wore their hair fairly long, they continued to curl or wave it.

Men have also from time to time in history imitated women's hairless face by shaving. They have also done what they could to give themselves some front interest. Men, not having natural chest adornments, created artificial ones, decorating their chests with necklaces, lace, and ruffles, and at times frankly imitating women. In the 15th and 16th centuries men cut out the top of their doublets in imitation of female décolletage. They were also fond of stuffing the front of their doublets. When the stuffing was high, men looked like full-bosomed matrons (when low as if they were pregnant). French dandies of the 18th century wore a small pillow under their cravats to swell them out. Even somber Victorian men loved fancy waistcoats and put that female symbol, the flower, in their lapel button.

Nor did Victorian men think it unmanly to wear a girdle. Men have frequently been as interested as women in having a slim waist. Cretan men cinched in their waists with leather belts and 15th century men wore tight metal corsets under their doublets, and Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, wore a corset under his waistcoat. Men have felt that a slim waist did as much for their broad shoulders as it did for a woman's hips.

Apparently men used to be as interested as women in showing off their figures. In fact, in modern civilization, it was men who began sexual display. In the Middle Ages when both men and women wore long shapeless gowns, it was men who, around 1340, began to shorten their skirts and expose their legs. It was only after men revealed their legs that women began to reveal their bosoms. As men's skirts got higher, women's décolletage got lower. Women finally succeeded in displaying their whole bosom, as some portraits of Queen Elizabeth I attest. Men,

in turn, exposed the whole length of their legs. And more. The tunic became so short that the law decreed that "no knight under the rank of a lord, esquire or gentleman...shall wear any gown...that is not long enough, when he stands upright, to cover his privities and his buttocks under the penalty of twenty shillings."

Men were exposing their privities because tights originally were two separate stockings extended and joined at the waist. When the stockings were joined at the crotch, the church still complained that the genitals were too conspicuous. For decency's sake, men began to wear a pouch over the crotch to better conceal their sex. This pouch was the original codpiece, a simple scrotum bag. But what was meant to conceal became a way of calling attention to the hidden part. Codpieces became larger and larger; they were stuffed and padded until they sometimes reached the size of a child's head. These civilized men were not so different from primitive men who wear huge gourds over their penises or construct elaborate penis cases.

The codpiece lasted over 100 years, disappearing among the increasingly wide folds of trunk hose. During the 17th and 18th centuries breeches entirely disappeared under varieties of skirts, and women were allowed only a limited view of men's legs and not a hint of their sexual apparatus.

Male modesty did not last long. Late in the 18th century, when men's skirts were cut away, their legs were again in full view. So was the front opening of the breeches, which since it had been hidden under men's skirted coats, was a plain buttoned slit. This direct opening was now considered indecent and "falls" were invented, which were a flap buttoning at each side of the hips (a sort of front drop seat). These falls must have been inconvenient, as sailors would understand, and attempts were made to reintroduce the slit opening-for almost 100 years to no avail. In Spain such attempts were prosecuted by the Inquisition. Any hint of men's front equipment was seemingly taboo.

But the fact of the matter is their "sex" was obvious because breeches were then so tight fashionable men did not dare sit down lest their pantaloons (a longer form of tight breeches) split. Some men were sewn into theirs, and during the Regency dandies used to wet their buckskin pantaloons so when they dried they would fit more closely. Most pantaloons were made of a jersey-like fabric so that they clung to the body. Since they were most commonly white, they now remind us of long underwear except that there is no front opening. But falls, which were a pretense that men had no need of a front opening, only succeeded in letting the eye focus on the genitals without distraction. The codpiece, stuffed and padded, was merely symbolic of what it concealed. The tight breeches worn in the late 18th and early 19th centuries outlined the real thing.

It is therefore not surprising that from 1790 to the late 1830's breeches acquired many euphemisms: inexpressibles, ineffables, unwhisperables, unmentionables. "Unmentionables" now refers to women's panties, but this term used to refer to men's breeches. Historians of dress seem never to ask why breeches acquired these coy names. Perhaps because the answer is as obvious as men's sex organs then were. For it was clearly the genital display that was unmentionable, not the breeches. Breeches became unmentionable only by association; then by a similar extension, so did legs.

At any rate, by mid 19th century men's legs were in hiding. No longer could a man show off a bulging calf. (False calves, by the way, were much worn in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries.) Men's legs were concealed in "those sacks of things called trousers," heavy shapeless tubes sometimes 17½ in.

drawers, under wider and wider skirts and could not reveal them until legs became a feature of feminine sexuality. Women sexualized their legs pretty much in the way men had done in the past. They decorated their "trousers" with ribbons and lace, wore fancy stockings, and propped their legs up on high heels. When stockings became transparent, women had to "feminize" their legs by shaving off every trace of hairy masculinity. It took many decades before legs were converted into female secondary sexual characteristics and women's legs could come out of hiding.

Women's exposed legs were then part of her sexual allure, not means of her assertion. Freeing women's legs from encumbering skirts led to the cancan and Playboy more than to equal rights with men. For what did the average woman do after 1920 when she gained the right to vote? She shortened her skirts and danced the Charleston. Not from joy at her new opportunities; few women entered the professions. Again in 1965 when sex discrimination in employment was forbidden by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, what did the average woman do? Did she file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or decide to become a pilot? No. She put on a miniskirt.

The miniskirt is now regarded as further evidence of woman's sexual liberation. Yet what sexual liberties has she gained since Victorian days but the liberty to show off more of her body - the liberty to dance topless or to be a naked paper doll in men's magazines? Has she been able to shed her sexual passivity with her clothes? No. A woman, in spite of the assertion of a black lace negligee, is supposed to surrender. Woman is still sexual prey, the hunted not the hunter. How many women, in spite of their bikinis, dare ask a man out on a date? How many miniskirted women studying karate dare ask a man to bed? How many members of the National Organization for Women have dispensed with cosmetics, high heels, and fashionable clothes? How many professional women--doctors, lawyers, teachers--have stopped trying to look sexy?

Professional women still follow the advice Mary Wortley Montagu gave her daughter in 1753: "Hide your learning as you would a physical defect." Learned women nowadays conceal the defect of their intelligence by wearing all the trappings of beauty--a mask of cosmetics, hair curled a la mode, bosom and hips stylishly shaped by a bra and girdle, and with whatever length of leg showing that fashion currently decrees. By assuming the insignia of the sex object, professional women try to reassure themselves that their "masculine" work has not unsexed them. For to be a woman today means one must look like a sexual plaything, which is why women are the slaves of fashion, obediently molding themselves into the latest pattern of femininity, that is, sexiness.

One would like to think that the current resistance to longer skirts means that woman is declaring her independence of fashion, but more likely it means that she still regards her legs as an indispensable part of her sexiness. In 1929 women refused to give up short skirts and wear the street-length skirts Paris was trying to reintroduce. They refused not because they were asserting their newly won liberties, but because legs had become a necessary part of the sexual equipment a woman used to get a man. During the next thirty years the number of women who wanted to be more than some man's wife and the mother of his children sharply decreased.

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to the House. Although her action was considered sufficiently unconventional to make the front pages of newspapers throughout the country, and though one of her male colleagues indirectly accused her of being a lesbian by calling to her, "Hi, guy?" within a year an increasing number of women were wearing pantsuits to work and everywhere else. So acceptable have pantsuits become that Amy Vanderbilt has devised rules of etiquette for their proper wear. Is it surprising however, that her basic rule is--the woman in pants must never forget she is a woman? She must not walk like a man or sit with her legs apart or put her feet up on her desk. She must walk and move in a feminine way, the way Chinese women used to in spite of the pants they wore for centuries. Vanderbilt forgets to remind women that the Chinese "feminine" walk was the result of tightly bound feet. The modern woman, notwithstanding her pantsuit, must keep within the bounds of her sex. Psychically she must not "wear the pants", nor even assume the postures of masculine freedom and assertion.

That the pantsuit vogue is an effect of the current woman's liberation movement and of woman's greater equality with men is without a doubt; but that pantsuits themselves indicate that equality between the sexes exists or is just around the corner is doubtful. Most of the women who wear pantsuits are not interested in sexual equality; they are merely wearing what is fashionable. Similarly, most of the men who dress in colorful and decorative clothes and who have long hair and wear "Male" perfume are not asserting their equal right to sexual display; they too are merely wearing what is fashionable.

Nevertheless, the fact that men and women are beginning to dress more alike may indicate that the great division between the sexes is coming to an end, that men and women will not have to conform so rigorously to the cultural stereotypes of maleness and femaleness. But it should not be forgotten that the current similarity in the dress of the sexes may have little significance. The sharp difference in the dress of men and women in the Victorian period was an aberration in history; in most other periods the sexes did not dress so differently; for centuries both men and women wore long skirts or colorful silks and laces and earrings, and men were, nonetheless, the dominant sex. In Persia and China men and women both wore pants and the men still ruled.

Clothing is skin deep. It can be a symbol: the nineteenth century feminist who wore the Bloomer costume was asserting her equal rights. But the average twentieth century woman in a pantsuit is being fashionable, for most people wear clothes to conform, to become an indistinguishable member of a particular herd, not to express an inner state of freedom. History will regard the present similarity in the dress of men and women as the outward sign of a true equality between the sexes only if the inner man and woman succeeds in divesting his and her psyche of its male-female cultural uniforms.

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around each leg, and falls were replaced by a front opening, but one that was concealed under a fold of material-the fly. Since then, trousers have at times been slimmer, at times wider, but men's genitals and legs have retired from the sexual arena. When a few adventurous businessmen wore Bermuda shorts to work one summer, they felt compelled to cover the lower half of their legs with knee socks. Even so, the fashion did not catch on.

Men are now modest. Except at the beach and in a few sports, they cover themselves up almost as completely as Moorish women. During the business day men wear a loose jacket which it is not good form to remove, a shirt buttoned to the neck, trousers that conceal the shape of the legs, socks that hide the ankles and heavy shoes that encase the foot. A group of men in their plain dark suits remind us of our Puritan forefathers-stern, sober, repressed.

Men have renounced sexual allure, that is they have almost completely divorced themselves from those aspects of dress now regarded as basically and exclusively female. They started to do so at the end of the 18th century, when they gave up wearing silks and satins and began wearing sturdy fabrics of an increasingly somber color. They then not only ceased displaying their legs and sex organs, they forswore cosmetics, perfume, showy jewelry, and slowly gave up curling their hair, eventually shearing most of it off. Men did not entirely give up adorning their chests, however, which is perfectly understandable in a species that copulates face to face. For even contemporary men, whose dress is much less decorative than that of Victorian men, have not been able to renounce chest adornment. They have instead defeminized their front interest by "phal-lusizing" the necktie, converting it into a symbol of masculinity, a process which began in the Victorian period when men's jackets got cut higher, their collars stiffer, the lines of their clothes straighter until men became ramrods of propriety, sharply differentiating themselves from women, whose bosoms could still be exposed and whose fragile colorful skirts expanded into wider and wider circles. At no period in history was there a greater difference in the dress of the sexes.

Yet underlying that great difference was a protest of similarity. Underneath the Victorian woman's billowing skirts lurked a male garment. Underneath the farthingale of the 16th century and the hoops of the 18th century, a woman, except for stockings, was naked. Underneath the crinolines of the 19th century was a bifurcated garment-cambric trousers, drawers.

It is not without significance that this male garment began to be adopted by women early in the 19th century, shortly after the feminist movement began. In 1789 the Frenchwoman Olympe de Gouge, under the influence of Revolutionary ideas of equality, had written: "Women are born with equal rights with men.... All official appointments....must be open equally to men and to women." In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her Vindications of the Rights of Women and had dared to establish a nonmarital union with a man. Her daughter, Mary Godwin, also dared to live with the poet Shelley without benefit of clergy, and she also wrote a book, the novel Frankenstein. The current ideas about equality between the sexes were reflected in dress. At the same time that men were wearing their tight "unmentionables", women were wearing simple clinging dresses with nothing on or only a slip underneath.

The "unmentionable" dress of both sexes was premature, for mankind was not ready for equality between the sexes. When Mary Wollstonecraft's lover left her, she attempted suicide; she married her second lover when she became pregnant. Her daughter eventually married Shelley. In 1804 Amelia Opie wrote a novel

about such free unions in which she concluded they were wrong because they ostracized the couple from society and thus from doing good. But society had to ostracize such couples, for it was not yet so structured that men and women could live as equals. Birth control hardly existed, so women were compelled to have children year after year and could not in any numbers enter the business and professional world, a world from which they had further been separated by the industrial revolution, which kept men away from home all day, reinforcing the division between the sexes.

Society would have to be radically reorganized before the sexes could be equal, which the 19th century was not prepared to do. Instead, it fearfully reversed itself: the equally revealing dress of men and women at the beginning of the century became the sharply differentiated dress of the Victorian period. The differences between the sexes became so exaggerated that men and women were regarded as virtually distinct species, women being denied their very sexuality as if they couldn't interbreed with men. In the past, though women were regarded as inferiors, no one had denied their equal capacity for passion. Indeed, men used to complain of woman's insatiability. Now women, purified of sexual drive, floated about in their crinolines as if they were angels and didn't need lower parts to propel them.

Yet there were women's drawers--the symbol of her likeness to men--hiding beneath her many skirts, which was why women's drawers were at first "unmentionables." They were a male garment. For years no good, no proper woman would wear them. As late as the 1870's a rector's wife could write a letter of protest to a magazine that had carried an ad for drawers, insisting she had never worn such an indecent garment and never would.

But by then most women were wearing drawers, and it was inevitable once women had them on that their now unnecessary skirts--the concealers of their equality--would come off. The heroine of Amelia Opie's novel about free love expressed her admiration of "the convenient trousers...of the Turkish women." She did not dare wear them. But in the 1850's a few women did adopt Turkish dress, long full trousers gathered at the ankle with a dress over them that reached a little below the knee. The women who wore the Bloomer costume were feminists. By showing their trousered legs they were symbolically declaring their equality with men. And in increasing numbers they fought for equal rights, achieving some success. Among other things, they gained the right to go to college, to get a divorce, to own property when married. A fair number of women entered "male" professions, becoming doctors, lawyers, ministers, even typesetters

The average woman did no such masculine thing, though she too began to show off her drawers. For when good modest women blushinglly concealed the legs of furniture under pantalettes, what were they doing if not displaying for all the world to see the new female underwear? Women soon began to show their real drawers too. Drawers began to be made of scarlet fabric, the color associated with sin, and to be frilled, laced and beribboned, and to peep from beneath a lady's skirts. Drawers became unmentionables in another sense--they became sexy.

The feminists who wore the Bloomer costume had wanted to show they had legs to stand on. The Bloomer costume was worn only by a few women for a few years. Women would not achieve the right to show they had legs until legs ceased to be a masculine threat and became graceful adornments.

It took legs a long time to get feminized, which should not be surprising for as late as the 1830's legs were still a feature of masculine sexuality. Consequently, for a man to have been interested in legs would have savored of homosexuality, just as now we might be suspicious of a man who admired muscular women. Women concealed their masculine appendages, made more masculine by

drawers, under wider and wider skirts and could not reveal them until legs became a feature of feminine sexuality. Women sexualized their legs pretty much in the way men had done in the past. They decorated their "trousers" with ribbons and lace, wore fancy stockings, and propped their legs up on high heels. When stockings became transparent, women had to "feminize" their legs by shaving off every trace of hairy masculinity. It took many decades before legs were converted into female secondary sexual characteristics and women's legs could come out of hiding.

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