

# CROSS-TALK

The Gender Community's News & Information Monthly

#59

\$7.00



**GOING PUBLIC vs. BEING INVISIBLE: WHICH IS RIGHT?**

**TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS**

**ALTERNATIVE GENDER PRESENTATIONS: A LONG TRADITION**

**YOU CAN'T "PASS" WHEN THERE'S NOTHING TO PASS AS**

**WHAT IF SKIRTS WERE NORMAL MALE ATTIRE?**

**MOVIE REVIEW: JUST LIKE A WOMAN**

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# CROSS-TALK

The Gender Community's News & Information Monthly

SEPTEMBER 1994  
(ISSUE #59)



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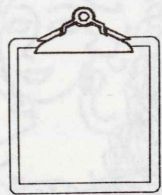
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## KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD

### GOING PUBLIC WITH OUR LIVES: THE SEQUEL

by Kimberleigh Richards

Two pieces of July's mail were strangely well-timed because of their juxtaposition with an event that was on my calendar for the middle of that month.

The first was a letter from a subscriber (who prefers to remain anonymous) requesting the cancellation of her **Cross-Talk** subscription because she is nearing the end of her Real Life Test and has sex-reassignment surgery scheduled for the near future. In her letter, she indicated that she had let other subscriptions and memberships lapse in our community as well, on the basis that she felt it important to blend in with her local community as a "normal woman". She indicated that the only ties she will not sever are those with close friends she has made in the community, but she feels the need to leave behind some of her "old life" as she enters the new.

The second was a commentary in *Crystal Chronicle*, the newsletter of the Ohio group The Crystal Club, in which the writer, Adrienne, indicated that she would not attend her 25th high school class reunion because she felt that now, having "finally left the past, I could not go and not be me". She went on to say that her 20th reunion had occurred just a few months before her self-discovery voyage began, and that her reasoning for not attending the 25th was due to her family not knowing her *femme* self yet and that her brother and sister would have been at the reunion (which invited other classes' members to attend as well). Her commentary ended: "Let my classmates forget him, because he will not return as anyone they have known, but as she, whom maybe now they can be friends with."

Five years ago I attended by 15th reunion crossdressed (I was not yet living full-time as Kym, but was spending a great deal of my social life *en femme*). I wrote about it in issue #9 of **Cross-Talk** in an article entitled *Going Public With Our Lives*. (Maybe I'll reprint it one of these days.)

This past July was my 20th reunion, and I felt absolutely no hesitancy about attending as Kym once again. If anything, I felt **more** comfortable this time, since I have now had the opportunity to grow into the role I have chosen to spend the rest of my life in. About the only

nervousness I had was due to my now being an "out" lesbian as well. I should have known better than to be nervous ...

About two-thirds of those in attendance were also at the reunion five years ago. Most of the other third I haven't seen in the twenty years since we graduated, except a few who attended either our five-year or ten-year reunions, one male classmate -- my former business partner -- who had known I crossdressed, and a female classmate who had seen me crossdressed a dozen years ago when I was exploring the TS question (and who showed up with her girlfriend).

**I simply do not need to apologize for the fact that I spent the first 33 years of my life as a boy and a man.**

If anything, the reactions were even more positive than before. Of course, those who were present five years ago were pretty much nonplussed, except that the women who had been so wonderfully supportive about my crossdressing last time shifted to being wonderfully supportive about my new image and my recently discovered lesbian orientation. The men were (not surprisingly) tongue-tied and couldn't decide what to say to me -- most slipped at least once and called me by the name they'd known me by for three years back in the early '70s -- yet their wives had no trouble accepting me as a woman from the moment they met me.

Of course, I am fortunate that my business deals with the gender community and thus I don't have to make allowances for my transgendered lifestyle in order to make a living. I am also fortunate that I'm able to extend that attitude to every aspect of my life. I simply do not need to apologize for the fact that I spent the first 33 years of my life as a boy and a man and I am spending the rest of my life as a woman. I simply **am** who I am, and the rest of the world can either deal with it ... or ignore it (if they have the luxury of exercising that option).

This also has a positive effect on my being a leader in our community. I have the freedom to appear publicly on behalf of the organizations I am affiliated with that many others do not. It is that freedom which allowed me to salvage what could have been a disaster for Tri-Ess when the media showed up at the convention last November by

offering myself as an on-camera spokesperson. I am simply not afraid of the outside world knowing I am transgendered, because I have nothing to lose by the revelation.

So it makes me sad when someone ending their RLT and approaching SRS feels the need to shut the door on the community that was their supportive home because their perceived need to "get on with their lives" supersedes the leadership they could provide for this supportive community ... leadership that would be enhanced by the wisdom they have gained through their experiences. It makes me sad when someone who has already transitioned cannot share their new lives with old friends from their past simply because they have not had the courage to share their new lives with their families.

It almost seems as if they have traded one closet for another; the closet that once hid their transgendered natures from the outside world, because they were ashamed or afraid of discovery, now hides their past as if they were every bit as ashamed or afraid of that as well.

I like to think that I have a walk-in closet with a door that has been permanently knocked off its hinges. My life is

wide open for observation and questioning, not only by those in our community who can benefit from what I've learned on the way to who I am, but by those who find my openness an opportunity to find out what this whole transgendered lifestyle is about. And it makes me sad that in both of the cases I mentioned at the outset opportunities for educational outreach are being lost.

In 1989 I wrote that "going public" was the only way to truly make ourselves more acceptable to the masses. Five years later, I am even more convinced that this philosophy is correct. Yes, it's a little scary at times; yes, there's always the possibility of an unpredictable reaction; yes, you do still (sometimes) need to watch your back.

But the support you'll eventually get from friends, family, former classmates (!) ... even the occasional total stranger ... more than make up for it. Think about it and think about being just a **little** more open about your life.

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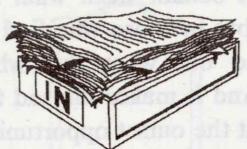
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# "Cross-Talk" Newswire

## News of the worldwide gender community

The committee responsible for last year's Tri-Ess "Holiday En Femme" has released the results of a survey of convention participants.

Responding to community concern over the unexpected media coverage of the convention, the committee included several questions on the coverage, including some targeted at those who agreed to be interviewed by the media. The survey revealed a 98% approval rating of the media coverage by all participants, according to "Holiday" chairperson Kathy Helms.

"Although a few convention participants opted to return to their rooms or other areas while the television crews were filming," Helms said, "most were not inconvenienced by the media coverage. Two or three people said that they had been approached by reporters and declined to participate, but the crews honored their request for privacy in all such cases."

The survey also covered workshop topics, keynote speakers, and outside events. Many reported that they disliked having speakers at meals, and there were several who

were disappointed by the female impersonator show at the nearby Queen Mary nightclub. Helms was especially surprised by the latter comment and said that those who attended a nearby dinner theatre instead made no similar negative comments.

○○○

International Gender Transient Affinity director Phaedra Kelly has brought a African organization with a potentially-confusing name to the attention of Tri-Ess executive director Carol Beecroft.

In a letter dated June 17, Kelly indicated that an organization calling itself "Transformation Second Self" based in Nigeria had made contact with Renaissance Education Association in 1990 asking for information and literature on transgendered issues, but that her research had turned up no listing in Nigeria's civil or business directories, even though the author of that letter had claimed that Transformation was "the world's largest business search company". Her subsequent correspondence has not been returned as undeliverable, yet Kelly says she has received no reply. The Nigerian Embassy in London has also been unable to locate any information on the company.

Kelly said her motivation in alerting Tri-Ess -- whose full legal name is Society for the Second Self, Inc. -- was a listing in a recent *Tapestry* for the Nigerian organization. She says that "in Nigeria's repressed police state, any western TV/TS material would be seen as raw pornography and fetch high prices", speculating that the organization could be nothing more than a front for a postal worker there who has fashioned a false address and collecting the mail for potential profit.

Tri-Ess director of chapter development Marlene L. has opened a dialogue with Kelly to exchange any further information that may come to the attention of either party.

○○○

The Gender Identity Center of Colorado, which has served Denver's crossdresser/transsexual community since 1978, has been asked to leave its long-time home by the property's new owners.

According to GIC vice president Susan Conder, the new owners of the property have asked them to vacate the premises by the first of September so that "major refurbishing to the house" can take place. Conder did not indicate whether GIC would be able to return to the house,

on West 32nd Avenue, after the remodeling. A new address has not yet been confirmed, nor did Conder know if the organization's telephone number would change as a result.

○○○

A national conference on female-to-male crossdressers and transsexuals will be partially funded by a \$500 grant from the American Educational Gender Information service, according to AEGIS executive director Dallas Denny.

In making the award, Denny hoped it would spark more interest in FTM issues at gender community conferences, saying "the programming is usually geared primarily toward feminine self-expression ... a conference for men will allow the full expression of masculine energies, unconstrained by a model which originated to serve the needs of MTF persons."

Denny also announced that a future issue of AEGIS' magazine *Chrysalis Quarterly* will concentrate on FTM issues. Former Ingersoll Center executive director Jason Cromwell will serve as guest editor of that issue.

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Preliminary results of a survey to determine the opinions of transgendered consumers to the Standards of Care of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association has been released by AEGIS.

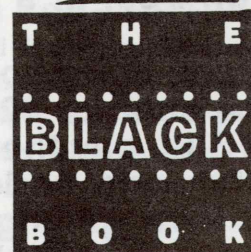
339 questionnaires were returned by survey participants, and a presentation based on the initial findings from that database was made at the April regional meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, also known as Quad-S. Those findings indicate that the majority of respondents identify as transsexual, have heard of the HBGDA Standards of Care, and believe those Standards serve a useful purpose (79.4% have heard of the Standards and 92.6% of those who have heard of them validated their usefulness). The findings also show that of the 339 respondents, 282 have been in or currently are in therapy because of gender issues, 219 are crossliving, 252 have had or are having hormonal therapy, and 261 have had or are planning to have SRS.

Additional findings will be presented at next February's International Congress on Crossdressing, Sex and Gender at California State University Northridge.

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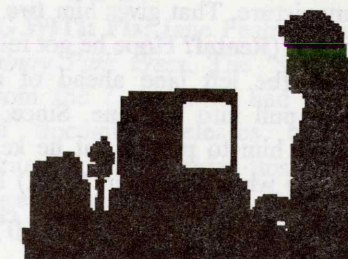
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# The Diva Of Dish

-- Angela Gardner

Well, I know I said I wasn't going to tread on the island of Manhattan June 26th. That resolution lasted till I got a call from the casting director in charge of hiring the female impersonators for the new Spielberg flick that started lensing last month in the Big Apple. They wanted me to get gussied up and attend an open call that evening. What could I do? I gussied and went.

The traffic and crowds weren't that bad going into Manhattan. I even found a parking spot on the same block as Webster Hall, the giant club where they held the casting session. After signing up I had a cocktail and, being a middle aged queen who needs her beauty rest, I decided to head for home.

Under the evil influence of demon gin I forgot that Seventh Avenue in Greenwich Village was not the place to try and drive a vehicle on that particular evening. As I sat in the traffic jam at Christopher Street gays, lesbians and transgendered folks partied all around me. One guy leaned out the broken back window of his rental van to take my picture. That gives him two souvenirs to take back to Georgia. (Rental? Hope he got full coverage!)

A car in the left lane ahead of me was half-heartedly trying to pull into my lane. Since I am always a lady I waited for him to pull in but he kept hesitating. (Not the thing to do when driving in NYC.) I reverted somewhat to masculine mode and actually clearly enunciated the phrase, "Come on buddy! Move it!"

The lesbian on a motorcycle next to me said something to the effect of, "You tell 'em, queen!" It was a moment of bonding. I would have parked the car and hung out, but there was nowhere to park.

That's my Stonewall 25 story.



**THE WIGS ARE ALRIGHT:** An employee of USAir is suing that airline over their dress code. Jon Coia is a long-haired baggage handler who has kept his hair in a ponytail for about twenty years. He also sports an earring. This guy's a regular hippy! How many crossdressers have used that excuse? "I keep it long in honor of Jimi, man." They told Jon to cut his ponytail in 1991 but he refused and filed suit in June, saying the dress code violates his civil rights. An airline spokesman got himself in hot water with us when he said dress codes do not have to be sexually equal. "You wouldn't let a man come to work wearing a dress." Well now, hold it a minute. If his dress didn't

hinder his baggage handling capabilities, I ask you, why not?

The irony of the whole story is, Coia's supervisors said he wouldn't have to get a hair cut if he would stuff it all under a short wig. Think you could get your company to order you to wear a wig? Perhaps a simple page boy. How about a shag? Calling Eva Gabor!

Thanks to Linda C. of LSV Renaissance for the clipping from AP.



**AWARD FOR LONGEST NAME/MOST CONFUSING PRESS RELEASE:** We've gotten a few press releases from an organization called The National Harry Benjamin Gender Dysphoric Association and frankly, they've been too confusing for me to comment on. It seems the NHBGDA is a Colorado based association that provides referrals to providers for transgendered individuals seeking psychologists or surgeons. This referral is free to the gender dysphoric and the providers pay \$75.00 to register with the NHBGDA. (Pssst. Providers can get a free listing in the *Who's Who & Resource Guide* from Creative Design Services.)

Okay, I think I've got that. They would also like us to know that they have nothing to do with The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc. in Sonoma, California. The HBIGDA is often confused with the NHBGDA, I guess. I can't think why. Maybe because both organizations have names that only turn into gibberish when you use the first initials.

Write to the NHBGDA at 3506 South Ouray Circle, Aurora CO 80013 or call them at (303) 754-7579 for more information on their referrals. Their founder, Sharon F. Daugherty, is working her way through law school in an attempt to earn a Juris Doctorate degree dedicated to laws on behalf of gender dysphoric individuals. It might be a good idea if she took a course on effective writing for press releases.



**LIKE BUTTER ... WELL, MARGARINE:** The cover story of the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* June 19, 1994 Entertainment section had a performance photo of Barbara Streisand taking up almost half the page. But, what does that say under the photo? It says, "Jim Bailey on stage as Barbra Streisand." And he looks just like her. Of course Jim doesn't just look like her, he sings like her ... and the

tickets are a lot cheaper to his show; \$25 as opposed to \$400.

Like Ms. Gardner, Jim considers himself to be an actor. Unlike myself, Jim Bailey doesn't like to be called a female impersonator. In the *Inquirer* article he says, "I'm an actor. People compare me to Hal Holbrook, who played a one-man show as Mark Twain, or Robert Morse as Truman Capote. It's just the fact that I wear a dress. I could be singing as a man." Hal Holbrook may be an actor, but I think you could reasonably call him a Mark Twain impersonator.

Jim left the Philadelphia area to seek fame and fortune in Hollywood back in the sixties. He started out doing Phyllis Diller and then discovered that he could sing like Judy Garland. "Something inside said, 'Do this.'" said Bailey. Since then he's been making his living by becoming famous women. He has appeared on several television shows -- mostly in a dress -- including *Here's Lucy*, *The Rockford Files* and *Night Court*. In the latter he was Dan Fielding's old buddy who had been through SRS. That is a pretty good acting career and if Jim doesn't want to admit to anything other than an inner voice that urged him to do it, then who am I to argue with him? I know why I accept female impersonation acting jobs. It's fun! Lighten up, Bailey. Yes, you are a great artist but don't you enjoy it just a little bit?



**MORE SHOWBIZ DRAG:** If you haven't seen it, keep your eyes open for *Prime Suspects III* on PBS. It's part of their *Mystery!* series and it's a British made show which deals with a homicide investigation that takes place in the seedy underworld of England's sexual minorities. (Hey, I've been there!) Someone has killed a "rent boy," one of the street kids who make their living by prostitution. Homosexuals, pedophiles and drag queens are featured in the story line along with transsexuals and ... oh yes ... straight people. (I love the way they say, 'pee-do-phile.')

Don't worry girls, the story is well written, the acting is superb and the transsexual and transvestite characters are treated fairly. The fun part occurs in episode three when some of the straight cops go undercover to a club that features drag queens on stage and in the audience. The homosexual cop, who does not dress up, says the only way they'll be able to check out the patrons of this club in their search for clues is to go in drag since none of the male members pay any attention to the queens. Use their own prejudice against them. One scene has the cops being dressed up by a performer from the club who will also get them past the doorman. One of the policemen says it makes him feel like he's in *Some Like It Hot*. The FI reacts negatively to that reference and when the other cop says it's a comedy she replies, "For people who only feel right in drag, it's not funny."

If you see it listed, don't miss it.

**SUNSHINE SISSY MAN:** July's *Vanity Fair* had an interview with the son of '60s pop singer Donovan. He is also named Donovan and like dad, he has musical aspirations. While his dad was always a little fey, young Donovan Leitch is an absolute swish. His band is called Nancy Boy. That's an old English expression that means the same thing as sissy boy. In the photo accompanying the interview Donovan is wearing a fishnet unitard, spandex short shorts and a maribou coat accessorized with a black choker, black nail polish and alluring eye makeup. Unfortunately, from our standpoint, he isn't wearing falsies and he's got a bulge in his pants. He's still cute though.

He admits to bisexuality. He says he is in love with model Kate Moss and he has a huge crush on Jaye Davidson, (who doesn't?) but, they're just friends. He also says he has never acted on his attraction to men.

When questioned about his high swish factor he replied, "True, I'm completely camp. I've never been macho. I feel like it's my alter ego, it's like a release. So many of my friends are gay, and I do feel like I really fit into that whole lifestyle in a way. But then, I'm so turned on and enraptured by women as well. Maybe I'm a lesbian." I know just how he feels. Keep your eyes open for young Donovan Leitch. He's an actor/model/singer/producer and androgyne-about-town.



**FILMS FLOUNCING WITH FIs:** Jane Peabody sent me a column from the *Asbury Park Press*. The "Screen Notes" column, originally from the *L.A. Times* had information about a bunch of upcoming releases that feature crossdressing. The writer seemed to think this was the way things were going since the success of *Mrs. Doubtfire*. That is generally the way the Hollywood suits decide where to put the big development money but I have to disagree this time since two of the films mentioned were already in pre-production before *Mrs. Doubtfire* came out, and one is a film that was shot in Australia probably at least a year ago. I think the trend toward crossdressing in movies has more to do with a gradual build up from *Tootsie* to *The Crying Game* than *Mrs. D*.

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Whatever the reason, here are the flicks to watch for. Harvey Fierstein (who played Robin Williams brother in *Mrs. D*) has written a script called *Plucked*. It's the story of a drag queen who has to raise his sister's kids after she deserts them. It's being produced by Dolly Parton's company Sandollar Productions. Sounds like it could be a hoot. No word if Harvey will play the DQ.



**WALK ON THE ...** Next up in the cavalcade of queens is the life story of Holly Woodlawn. "Holly came from Miami, F.L.A. Hitchhiked her way across the U.S.A.." Holly's in Hollywood now and her autobiography, *A Low Life In High Heels* has been optioned by the producer who brought us the ever memorable *Father of The Bride*. (Huh?) This was reported as a starring vehicle for Madonna, who was reportedly set to play the role of Candy Darling ("Candy came from out on the Island. In the back room she was everybody's darling.") and Harvey Fierstein was penning the script. Well, they don't mention Maddie or Harv in this latest report. That's show biz.



**WITH THREE YOU GET EGGROLL:** The Steven Spielberg project, *To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar*. It's the story of three drag queens who make a journey through the South (and live to tell about it!) They include a white queen, a Hispanic queen, and a black queen played by action movie star Wesley Snipes. In an interview with the *Gay News*, Snipes said the director asked everyone to audition in drag. Sounds reasonable to me. He also said, "It wasn't the first time."

Before the interested reporter could ask when Wesley had done drag before he quickly changed the subject and started talking about his current film, *Sugar Hill*. Later in the interview Snipes talked about how hard it is to just be a regular guy and go out in public. He can't even get away from the limelight by using disguises. "It seems like I always dress the way I do in the movies." The interviewer said that soon (after people see *To Wong Foo ...*) even drag won't be a sufficient disguise. Snipes laughed and said, "Girl, you will see me. I'm gonna be out there." (The

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interviewer was a guy named Steve.) Nobody called me to audition, so let's move along to another drag road picture, the aforementioned Australian film titled *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of The Desert*. This time the queens go walk-about in the outback in a beat-up bus called Priscilla. (This gives Crocodile Dundee a chance to check their gender without having to travel to New York.) If we think back to the success of that other Aussie import *Road Warrior*, maybe we can look forward to a whole series of pictures about these drag queens in Oz.



**WHITHER WOOD?** Not mentioned in the "Screen Notes" column was the Johnny Depp vehicle *The Ed Wood Story*. I don't even know if that's the title but they have wrapped shooting. (That's show talk.) Stories about Ed Wood (The transvestite director of *Plan Nine From Outer Space* and *Glen or Glenda?*) have hit the infotainment shows recently so they're no doubt the beginning of the Ed Wood promo blitz. Johnny was featured in an interview in *Us* magazine in which he said preparing for the role gave him a new respect for what women go through when they get all dressed up. He further stated that he has more regard for crossdressers now that he knows what they have to go through to feel pretty. He always keeps some of his wardrobe from his films. He reveals in this interview that he kept an Angora sweater and a pair of pumps from the Wood flick. See ya at the Queen Mary, Johnny.



**OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD:** I know we're not in Kansas anymore, we're everywhere. Crossdressing references are appearing more and more often in the popular media. I've received clippings of the *Wizard Of Id* comic strip from two of my readers. The strip appeared in June. In panel number one Rodney the Knight is walking past an alley and a peasant standing there asks him if he'd like to buy some hot merchandise. Rodney says, "Let's see it" and in the next panel the peasant pulls his smock up over his head and exposes a pair of frilly bloomers. The third panel has the peasant's smock back in order and Rodney faces the reader and says to himself, "I guess times are tough for crossdressers too."

Now, when I saw it I chuckled a little and said to myself, "Yeah, ain't no doubt about that." I then forgot about it until Elizabeth Jarrell sent it to me. Liz thought it was great. A real affirmation of the acknowledgement of crossdressers in the world as real people with the same kind of problems everybody has. Then I got the same clipping from George Fredericks. His comment was, "Oh, the trials and tribulations of we different people!"

I hope that George's tongue was firmly stuck in his cheek when he wrote that. If he really thinks the strip is taking a shot at us then I'm afraid his sense of humor is askew. Of course portraying the crossdresser as a sleazy guy standing

in an alley lifting his smock over his head to display his "hot merchandise" isn't that flattering but I know the majority of us don't engage in that kind of activity. At least not without some kind of advance cash up front. A girl's gotta have standards.

I have always been an advocate of maintaining a good sense of humor about what we do. Not just crossdressing. I think most human activities can be hilarious if you look at them from the right angle. (I've seen supposedly erotic films that were a real hoot.) So, lets all lighten up. How about a crossdresser jokes section in this column? I'm running out of classy quotes to close with so if people start sending me crossdresser jokes I might, remember, I'm saying might, start closing this column with a CD joke.



Speaking of a closing quote, I feel one coming on. "If we

can't turn the world around, we can at least bolster the victims." Liz Carpenter. So saying, I say: Adios Muchachas!



[Readers are requested to send mainstream press news items for this column to Ms. Gardner at P.O. Box 530, Bensalem PA 19020.]



## DRAGAZINE!

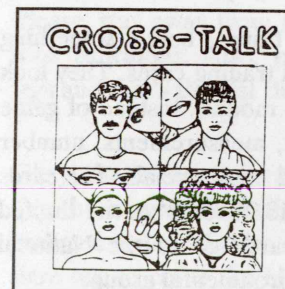
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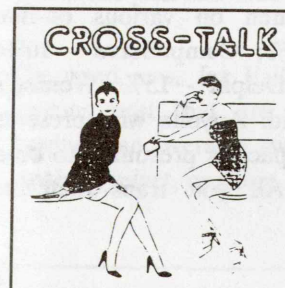
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## BACK ISSUE EXTRAVAGANZA!!!!

**Cross-Talk** is reaching more and more people every month, thanks to the many alternative press bookstores and newsstands that now order us for their customers from one of our growing list of distributors. But that exposure means there are many new readers who missed our earlier issues. Fortunately, we plan ahead and keep a supply of back issues for those new readers. Here are the most recent ones we have a good stock of:



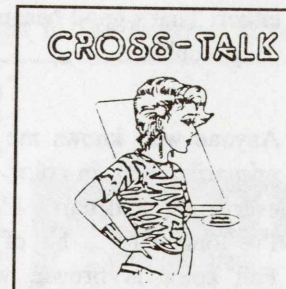
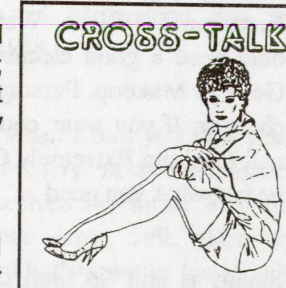
**#52 (Feb. '94):** Media coverage of gender community events; theories of male bonding among drag queens; therapists as gatekeepers; the natural approach to femininity; how to write crossdresser fiction; transgendered music; review of the movie *Farewell My Concubine*.



**#53 (Mar. '94):** Being misunderstood; differences between men and women; was Magnuss Hirschfeld ahead of his time?; androgyny test; surprises encountered upon leaving the closet; sex-reassignment surgery realities; changing terminology to circumvent the DSM; why wives and partners make good community leaders.

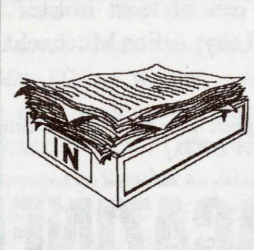
**#54 (Apr. '94):** The difference between constructive criticism and taking potshots; creating terms and then fitting into them; Dr. Roger Peo's final column; the effect of dishonesty on a relationship; rock stars in dresses; overview of 1993 international transgender law conference; memories of DREAM; abusive behavior in crossdressing.

**#55 (May '94):** Hotlines and effective outreach; using clothing as a "passport" to the opposite gender world; hypocrisy about homosexuality; coverage of IFGE convention; trends in military graffiti; Third World transgenderism; overcoming fear; non-traditional partners' needs.



Most issues of **Cross-Talk** published in magazine format are also available (#1 through #38 were published in newsletter format and are out of print), with the exception of issues #39 and #44, which are no longer available. Send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or an IRC if outside the U.S.) for a detailed listing. Look elsewhere in this issue of **Cross-Talk** for details on ordering a complete set of 1993 issues at a discounted price.

To order back issues, send \$7.00 for each issue ordered plus \$1.00 postage per magazine (\$1.50 per magazine outside the U.S.) to **Cross-Talk Dept. BI, P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365.** (California residents, add 58 cents per magazine sales tax.)



# HotBuzz!

-- JoAnn Roberts

"I'm going to speak my mind because I have nothing to lose."

-- S.I. Hayakawa

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Since this is September, the start of the season, so to speak, we'll get right to the good stuff first ... Why, the Fashion News, of course, *dahlings*.

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Dumbest New Look of the Season goes to the Pants + Skirt look. The idea here is to layer a miniskirt over slim pants. Pssst. Ms. Karan. If I wanted to wear pants, I wouldn't crossdress. Got it?

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We often spend a lot of time and energy learn how to apply makeup, but we don't give much thought to taking it off ... until the wife comes home early from that shopping excursion. Anyway, here's a quick primer of removal methods for eye makeup and mascara. Waterproof formulations require an oil-based remover to dissolve the makeup. Try Cover Girl Clean Eyes Make-Up Remover, or Noxzema Dif-Rinse. Water soluble mascara and shadows only need a good cleanser like Noxzema or Aveeda Pure Gel Eye Makeup. Personally, I use baby wipes. They're lots cheaper. If you wear contacts, you need a little more care and Clinique Extremely Gentle Eye Makeup Remover may be just what you need.

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Skinny is still "in" and the School Girl look has survived the summer. Thankfully, I haven't seen a crossdresser try to pull off the short-skirt, thigh-high stocking look. Come to think of it, I haven't seen any real women (off the runway) either. That's good because it's a look that could get you in deep trouble.

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Anyone who knows me well knows that my wardrobe is primarily black in color. Partly that's because it goes with everything, and partly it's because it's slimming. But lately I've longed for a bit of color and just in time the "new" Fall color is brown, warm brown. Colors like coffee, chocolate, and cinnamon are cropping up everywhere. I wonder if brown and black go together?

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While black and brown may not work, one way to add color and spice to your wardrobe is to add a hot, bright

color over basic black. Try brilliant green, neon pink, or fire engine red.

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Nothing will kill a good time like a killer pair of heels. What we need is a good shoe stretcher. Well, maybe we found a good technique. I pass this tidbit along from the pages of the MFGE news in Minnesota. Whatcha do is fill a pan with rubbing alcohol. Jam your foot into the shoe, then immerse foot and shoe in the alcohol. Let the alky saturate the shoe leather. The leather will begin to stretch immediately. Then take your foot out of the pan and let the alcohol evaporate while the shoe is still on your foot. Takes about 15 to 20 minutes. They say it works every time, but not on patent leather.

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For those of you into collecting things, here's something new to add to the list: Supermodel trading cards. They look like baseball cards but feature top models. Instead of game stats, the cards list height, weight, measurements, number of magazine covers, calendars, and commercials. The cards come in packs of 8 for \$1.69 or \$18.95 for a special limited edition set. Proceeds from the cards go to the National Resource Defense Council, an environmental group.

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Factoid -- Percentages of women on various on-line services: America OnLine - 30%; CompuServe - 10%; GEnie - 25%; Prodigy - 40%; Delphi - 15%; Women's WIRE - 90% ... Another Factoid: Anyone who presents themselves as a female in cyberspace is presumed to be a male until proven otherwise. All you trans-whatevers aren't fooling anyone on the Net.

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One thing is for certain, if you're not on the Net soon, you'll be cut-off from a major source of information. The Baby-Bells are the most likely candidates to bring the information superhighway into your home in the very near future. Once that happens, it is quite possible that the very nature of how we run our daily lives will undergo what is called a paradigm shift, a fundamental change. But for all the hype about the Internet and cyberspace, one thing puzzles me greatly. William Gibson, the author who popularized the term "cyberspace" isn't on the net. Think he knows something that we don't? Like, get a life, people.

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Even though the skirt length of the nanosecond seems to be just knee-length, short skirts have not disappeared (Thank God!). Well, if you were watching the runways, you might have wondered if they had disappeared. Some of the skirts seemed little more than a handkerchief around the model's waist. Luckily, what's seen on the runways doesn't make it to the stores that way. For example, a DKNY skirt that was 12" at the shows, is about 15" in the store, or a Norma Kamali that was 14" on the runway might be 19" on the rack. One reason it's a good bet for CDs to wear a shorter length has to do with body proportions. A female measures almost two-thirds of her height from her feet to waist, while a male only measures about half his height. In other words, given a male and female of the same height, the female's waist will be higher. Thus, to give the impression of longer legs on a crossdresser, show more leg, i.e., a shorter skirt. No, not **that** short!

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Okay, you succumbed to the fashion rave of the moment and bought a really short skirt. What do you wear with it? The number one recommendation is cover your legs. Wear heathered tights and knee boots, or ribbed tights and ankle boots, or black opaque pantyhose and high-cut pumps. Please, stay away from the thigh-high stockings. You'll just look ridiculous. Also, pale tights will add weight to your legs and that's the last thing you want.

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Okay, that's for under the mini, now what about over it? Try the newest fingertip length coats in single or double breasted styles. They're slightly fitted through the waist and flare out to cover the hips. Likely, it will cover the mini. It can also be worn with tight pants or leggings and boots. Under the jack and over the mini is a turtleneck blouse.

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The good news for Fall is that you've still got stuff from seasons past that are "in". Like a classic pantsuit, or leggings, an oversize sweater, ankle boots, pleated skirts, anything velvet, or shiny.

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Looks that have died an early death (thank goddess) -- exaggerated ruffles, messy hair, pale makeup, the waif-look, heavy shoes, baby doll dresses, and long narrow skirts.

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You think it's easy being a fashion maven? Check out these prices: Donna Karan neon pink velour jacket -- \$1350; Armani double breasted herringbone suit -- \$2430; Escada cobalt and black, wool and velvet suit -- \$2320; Richard Tyler plum wool gabardine riding jacket -- \$2400. And, if you think no one buys this stuff, here this: Donna Karan's one week take at Bergdorf's -- \$650,000; Armani's take at Bloomies in two days -- \$868,000; Chanel three day trunk show at Bergdorf's -- \$1.5 million. Would someone please introduce me to one of these Sugar Mommas?

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Get stuffed ... that's the message for Fall fashions. Stuff yourself into a WonderBra, a braslette or a corset. Yes, kids, the voluptuous female form is back in vogue. Many of the *haute couture* designers showed clothes that were very form fitting and the models wore undergarments with stays. Imagine, stays in the '90s! One report in *W* mentioned that corsets were back in style big time, especially custom-made corsets. Well, hey, if it wasn't for crossdressers buying this stuff when the real women weren't, it wouldn't be there for them now, would it? Thank you very much ... After all the hoopla caused by the introduction of the WonderBra, almost every lingerie company is rushing to market with their own version. But we all know that Frederick's of Hollywood has had super-duper push-up bras since 1948.

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You probably didn't believe me when I told you that stores and catalogs were starting to carry really fashionable clothes in larger sizes. I just received the latest Victoria's Secret catalog and almost every dress, suit, skirt, and blouse is available up to size 16. That's a major leap for VS and a great service for us. If they keep this up, I won't have to shop for anything anywhere else.

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Before I forget, I am now wired to the Internet. If you



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We had such a good response to the "Crossing The Lines of Gender" workshop we did last January (despite the bitter cold) that we're going to do it again, but in a different locale. Watch for details in a later **HotBuzz**, but we're coming to the New York City area in November.



If you've been wondering what to do with your time come this Fall, consider giving Fantasia Fair another try. Yes, it's been hard times for the Fair the past few years, but this year it has been revitalized by none other than our own Alison Laing. The "new" FanFair sports a lower cost and all new programs.



The **HotBuzz** about color for Fall is metallic, but not the same old gold and silver. Nope, this season we've got colors like pewter, brushed aluminum, chrome and the hottest metallic is gunmetal. These new colors lend a high-tech look to Fall's newest accessories, from shoes to bracelets to handbags. Prescriptives even has two lipsticks with metallic shimmer: Myth and Moonglow.



Remember last month I told you about the misinformation about transgendered folk on the Internet? Here's another sample of a little posting I found out there in cyberspace ...

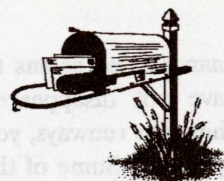
- Basic Rules of Lingerie*
- Women in garter belts & stockings: good.*
- Men in garter belts & stockings: bad.*
- Animals in garter belts & stockings: illegal.*
- Hobbits in garter belts & stockings: difficult.*
- Reptiles in garter belts & stockings: silly.*
- Bill Clinton in garter belts & stockings: slightly more often than Hillary.*
- Men should not wear panties.*
- Women 25+ pounds overweight should not wear lycra shorts.*
- Bras should go on breasts, not on head.*
- Underwear should be cleaned and pressed, no starch.*
- If it has cones, ice cream should go in it, not body parts.*
- Cindy Crawford can wear anything she wants, as long as it is not referred to as a "strap-on."*

There was quite a bit of discussion about "strap-on" in the last item. A lot of people didn't get it. There was also a lot of discussion about men in stockings and panties, mostly by men and not many against it. Very interesting.



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## VOX POPULI



There were no letters to the editor received for publication this month.

"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](mailto:Kymmer@xconn.com) via Cross Connection, (818) 841-8887, or to [kymmer@xconn.com](mailto: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 DOS ASCII files on disk at our P.O. Box.

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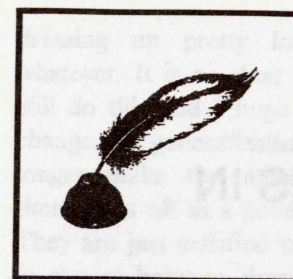
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## COGITO ERGO FEM

### ON BEING RESPONSIBLE

by Anne Blackwood

"DEMAND THE CURE FOR AIDS PROJECT" is what the sign read. Sign might be too kind a title for the posted flyer. DEMAND THE CURE FOR AIDS. DEMAND THE CURE FOR AIDS. "Give me the cure for AIDS, or I'll ..." or you'll what? Children, terrorists, and dictators make demands of parents, of governments, and of subjects. You cannot make demands of the universe.

"It's a conspiracy by the pharma--" Oh, puh leez!

The fact is that there has never been a cure for any viral infection. Vaccines, yes; but vaccines are not cures, they are only a method to trick your own immune system into being prepared for a particular virus. You still need a healthy immune system. On top of that, viruses are unstable; they mutate rapidly so that you need a new vaccine to protect you from the new strain.

DEMAND THE CURE FOR AIDS. If most of these people had taken some responsibility for their own lives they wouldn't need to demand a cure for AIDS. Except for those who got it from tainted blood supplies during transfusions or from blood clotting factors I have little sympathy for those with the disease. It is a preventable disease.

Yes, I have friends who died of it. It's too bad they're not here any more, but to quote the sister of a late friend who passed away from it -- to their mother who always went on about what a **genius** he was (he wasn't) -- "If he was such a genius, why is he dead?" He knew about the disease early on. He knew how to avoid getting it. He worked at the Sex Helpline telling people how to avoid getting it, but he didn't change his own behavior, and now he is dead. So is at least one of his lovers to whom he passed it.

Demand more of yourself.

"Science? That's boring!" "Biology? Snore city." "That's for nerds, man." Ignorance is bliss? Ignorance is death. You make your choices, you live with the consequences.

"The AIDS epidemic is a tragedy." I'll tell you what a tragedy is. Epilepsy is a tragedy. Breast cancer is a tragedy. Cervical cancer is a tragedy. Urban violence is a tragedy. Famine is a tragedy. Rape is a tragedy. *Hamlet* is a tragedy.

Demanding that **others** clean up our messes, making everything right that we screwed up is a **child's** approach to life. Living for the moment without regard to the consequences is a **child's** approach to life. That segment of the population that insists on immediate gratification gets exactly what it deserves, and the rest of society has no obligation to them when the bill comes due.

This column isn't really about AIDS, it's about responsibility. In a way it's about being an American ...

That segment of the population that insists on immediate gratification gets exactly what it deserves.

excuse me, an United Statesian (our neighbors in the Americas are touchy about that). I make no secret of the fact that I am a libertarian (a nonarchist, really); you do your thing and I'll do mine just so long as we don't interfere with one another. The price of individual liberty is **individual responsibility.** You

can't have the first without the second.

If someone knowingly engages in high risk behavior with high risk partners and then acquires an HIV infection and subsequently develops AIDS, does society have an obligation to take care of that individual? I think not. If a neighbor deliberately burns their house to the ground, do I have an obligation to help them rebuild it? No, although there may be circumstances in which it may be in my better interests to do so (but I would not before asking, "Now, Bob, if I help you rebuild, you're not going to burn your house down **again** are you?" and being fairly certain that the answer is "no"). If I have to foot the bill for your hospitalization and medication when you could have avoided the whole thing in the first place, I resent that as an intrusion on **my** personal liberties.

"It's easy for you to say, you don't have AIDS." **Exactly. I do not have AIDS!** Why not? Because I took responsibility for my actions and life and avoided behavior that would put me at risk. In the early '80s, it occurred to me that I might be bisexual (no, this does not mean I wanted sex with bison). If you recall this was at about the same time that news of AIDS hit the mainstream press. Where was AIDS predominantly found? In the Gay, Bi, and IV-drug-using populations. Where would my curiosity about my suspected bisexuality take me? Right into the (continued, page 15)



PASSING IS PASSE: BEING IS IN

by Virginia Prince

Women are no longer interested in playing to the male ego by appearing "pretty", attractive or alluring.

So where does this leave the crossdresser? We have kind of had the rug pulled out from beneath us. Of course this sloppier, more masculine and uncaring appearance of so many women today gives us less to look up to and admire and therefore less to imitate and want to be part of. And this, in turn, means less likelihood of being read if we dress in equally sloppy ways. But then, why go to the trouble? The girls aren't wearing heels, skirts or nicer blouses very frequently. Many of them wear little jewelry or lipstick. If a CD really dresses as he would prefer he would stick out like a sore thumb. Thinking of yourself as being Jane or Betty and having to dress more or less like you would as John or Bill is likely to have a pretty chilling effect on your TV desires, so why dress?

Of course, it can (and will) be argued that having to dress in a less attractive way won't necessarily stop you from expressing your softer, caring, sensitive side. True, it won't ... except that you won't be comfortable doing it because acting in more feminine ways when dressed more or less the way John or Bill might dress is going to make you feel out of place and even effeminate. After all, the main reason we crossdress is that it provides a real escape hatch out of our socially expected behavior while at the same time providing a visible doorway into a world where such behaviors, appearances and attitudes are not only permissible but expected. After all the old "duck" argument works; i.e., if you walk, talk and quack like a woman you are a woman. But when many or most of the females in sight are dressing, walking, and behaving like boys or men what are they, and if you do the same what are you?

So while women do not have to "pass", they used to take more interest in their appearance than they do these days. So what are they doing these days ... in their own minds, I mean? Answer: they are simply being! They are clothed, they are modest, they are warm and except for special parties they are not trying to impress anybody or have any special effect on anyone else. They are just being themselves.

Now don't rush to point out exceptions to the above, like

"Passing" used to be the name of the game. In my younger days (the '60s and '70s) I had a motto to live up to. It was: "Strive for Perfection to Avoid Detection!" It seemed pretty cute to me at the time and I tried to live up to it. As many of you will remember, I did a lot of traveling in those days and on several of those trips I shared rooms, cabins and even yurts (those quaint circular structures used by nomadic tribes in Mongolia, Iran and parts of far western China) with one or several unknowing females. One had to conform to the accepted standards of feminine dress and deportment. I guess I did, since I never had any trouble with my roommates ... except with one named Florence who got bent out of shape because I wanted to leave the window open one hot night in Ulan Bator in Outer Mongolia. She got so mad she jumped me from behind and tried to tear off my pajama top. But that was just good clean bitch fighting. Fortunately I stopped my reaction before Charles really got into it: I got a wrist lock on her and persuaded her that the window was to stay open, which it did. But passing was the thing that I strove for and so do most of the rest of you. That is, you did ... up until the last couple of years. What happened? Well, as women's liberation began to take hold women didn't care so much about their appearance as they used to. The clothes you see on women in the street and in the malls these days are a long way from the epitome of femininity, grace and loveliness. In effect, even the young girls and women have given up trying to "pass". They just dress anyway they darn please. All they seem to care about is keeping warm on cold days and modest enough not to encourage boys and men. With rapes and attacks against women on the increase, it seems that self-protection has led them to look as unfeminine and attractive as they comfortably can. The psychological result of this is that, except for special dates or special events women, are no longer interested in playing to the male ego by appearing pretty, attractive or alluring. All they are interested in is just "being": "Hey, this is me, I'm happy with myself and if you aren't it's just tough!"

dressing up pretty for parties, weddings, church or whatever. It is as clear to me as it is to you that women still do this and I hope they will continue. But it doesn't change my generalization that on the average women no longer make the attempts they used to do to show themselves off in a good light except on special occasions. They are just satisfied to be. And CDs in turn are having to choose between dressing as our mental image of what we are trying to imitate says or just putting on most any old thing that is handy and going out to the mall with the rest of the "liberated" and "I can't be bothered with all that dressing to look nice" women. I guess most of the young CDs (there must be a few out there) will make some sort of adjustment to the current situation, but I must say I feel a little sorry for them. They, in most cases, will be unable to enjoy the delicious feeling of being a really attractive girl or woman in heels, flowing skirts, a pretty blouse, makeup, hairdo, jewelry and all that "stuff" that made girls girls and not boys in my day, and maybe in yours too.

So I suggest that maybe the younger ones among us consider learning to just be women and not try so hard to conform (passing) to an image that is rapidly becoming passe itself. Think how a six-foot CD in three-inch heels, wearing a mid-thigh miniskirt and C or D boobs, will stand out in a crowd of younger women in cut-off jeans, an old shirt with the tails out, wearing ankle high thick soled army boots, with long but more or less uncombed hair and with little or no makeup or jewelry. "She" won't be "passing" with them but current fashion and custom are surely passing her by. What's a girl to do? Maybe the day is coming when there will "be no joy in Mudville, mighty "Cassie" has struck out!"

**COGITO ERGO FEM ... continued from page 13**

populations that were most effected by HIV. "Tain't worth it," I said to myself. I'm alive, my friend is dead, and that's all the argument I need to make. And by the way, I was with him when he died in an induced coma in an ICU at County/USC Medical Center. I didn't abandon him. No, it's not easy for me to say.

Those that are posting the flyer demanding the cure for AIDS are making the wrong demand to the wrong people at the wrong time. They should have demanded more of themselves before they got sick. And that is all I have to say about that.

[Anne Blackwood will be going on a self-imposed hiatus after this month's column. She may be reached by mail at P.O. Box 1281, Beverly Hills CA 90291, or at anne@xconn.com via Internet.]

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**WHAT'S ON THE TV TONIGHT?**

Cartoons by Christine-Jane Wilson

A book of nearly 100 cartoons drawn by Christine-Jane Wilson. In the magazine 'Forum', editor Isabel Koprowski wrote: " - the answer is not East-Enders, you'll be glad to hear, but delicious feminine clothing such as lacy bras, six inch stilettos and the sheerest of stockings.

"What's on the TV Tonight?" is a charming cartoon book depicting transvestites in a variety of amusing situations. Because it is the creation of a TV, none other than Christine-Jane Wilson, the editor of *The Glad Rag*, the book always laughs with, not at, transvestites. The author draws on her own experience, as well as her imagination, to produce cartoons showing the dreadfully embarrassing things that can happen to TVs, whether in social or family context. But it's not blushes all the way: some pages glow with the positive pride a cross-dresser may feel when found out unexpectedly.

"Transvestites will identify with the author and find the book reassuring as well as amusing. Everyone will be touched by the sensitivity and delicacy with which Christine-Jane treats the difficulties of being a TV".

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## SKIRTS FOR MEN



by Barbara Jean Jasen

A few months ago my sister Maureen in Iowa sent me a copy of an article that was in her local newspaper about skirts for men. We have gone thru this whole ball of wax in the past ... pantyhose for men, makeup for men, and about ten years ago they did try skirts for men. None went over very well with the buying public, but today they are showing up in the fashion collection of Jean-Paul Gaultier and Donna Karan and critics are applauding. They have been seen on men in the trendiest of watering holes in London, in New York, and Baltimore. Buyers for big department stores are taking them seriously, and there is a

good chance that in the next couple of years we may well see them on the racks of the local men's store and even in the men's section of K-Mart.

On *Regis & Kathie Lee Live* not long ago, according to my sister Linda in Tennessee, *Regis* and four other men were modeling skirts for men. It is quite

apparent that very soon they will become part of fashion for men. There is little doubt in my mind that once they do become part of the man's fashion wardrobe, things like pantyhose, makeup and other items that currently are only a part of the women's fashion wardrobe will soon follow.

As crossdressers this really should make us ecstatic, especially since one of the "in" looks is the grunge look; not some special design skirt for men, but rather skirts that come off the racks of Goodwill and Salvation Army stores. Very soon we will be able to wear our favorite skirt anyplace we want with no fear of our wives or the general public.

For years women's fashion has been adopting almost every article of men's wear ... pants, suitcoats, shoes, crew cut hair styles, even underwear that looks like men's boxer shorts. In reality women have been crossdressing for many years now.

But Linda posed us a new question that we really do need to look at: If things like skirts or dresses, heels, makeup and hose all became a part of men's fashion, and if women's fashion was entirely pants and suitcoats, would we continue to crossdress?

Picture coming home, slipping out of that beautiful dress,

scrubbing off that makeup, and slipping into a pair of pants and some old clodhoppers. "Arrrgh! No way!" you say, "I enjoy these pretty things too much. I enjoy being a girl." But you won't be a girl in a dress anymore, you will only be a girl in pants, so would you still crossdress?

I think the answer is yes. We would gladly slip from our heels and dresses to the suit and pants simply to be a girl.

Now I admit that I -- like most of you -- like the clothes, the feel of the material; but as I have said before I think they are only a tool that is used by God and our girl within to bring out the feminine qualities that we have within us.

We as crossdressers do not wish to be women, but rather we wish to gain the qualities that we admire in her. We wish to be **womanlike**. As crossdressers we have high admiration for the woman and her qualities, so much so that we wish to incorporate them into our own lives. When

we cross from the masculine to the feminine we cross from our world of reality to our world of fantasy. In our world of fantasy we are a different person that we are in our world of reality. But when we return we do not want to leave our fantasy world and so that person of fantasy returns with us to our world of reality, incorporating herself in with our masculine self. This is how crossdressing acts as a tool to make a better more well rounded and complete person out of us.

If men and women simply switch clothing styles, where will the escape from reality be? I don't think that a switch in clothing style will cause us to discontinue crossdressing. We would switch with the styles and gladly go put on our pants and suits. However, if the personalities of men and women were to switch, **that** would be a horse of a different color.

Fashion may change, but in the end no matter if we are wearing a dress or a pair of pants, femininity is something that we have inside of us. The feminine clothes are simply a tool that is used to bring out and to develop that feminine personality that we have for so many years been forced to suppress. As that femininity is brought out and developed, we will find that we are more and more feminine even while in our male persona. (continued, page 18)

If things like skirts or dresses, heels, makeup and hose became a part of men's fashion, would we continue to crossdress?

## WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE

by Linda Peacock

When I look at my women friends, I don't see their shapes and sizes, the color of their skin or hair, but instead, I see some remarkable human beings, for whose friendship I am truly grateful.

Recently at S.P.I.C.E., I was privileged to attend the sessions by Dr. Sandra Cole, a woman of substance, dignity and grace. She is a professional woman who has found her identity, incorporating it into her work and family, and generously sharing it with our community.

Sandra talked at one point about her entering her "goddess" stage, and I, for one, immediately identified with that concept and knew what she was talking about.

It is my belief that when a woman has reached that pinnacle of self-acknowledgement, who has "found herself," who knows the person who lives inside,

accepting herself, good and not so good, she enters what Sandra calls her "goddess" era. I think it is a point in life that not all women reach, because so many of us women continue to live in the past, never realizing their potential, their uniqueness.

Never is this so apparent than in what we call our "gender" community, that which is made up of gender-influenced people, their partners and family members. So often, you find women who seem so down-trodden, so overwhelmed and unable to digest what life has fed them. The bitter often overwhelms the sweet, and they dig to the bottom of the barrel in hopes things will be better.

The bitter knowledge of their partner's gender dysphoria is often overwhelming, and becomes the visible source of all their problems. They cannot cope with all that seems wrong in the life, and they flail about, never finding solid ground.

Those of us who work with women such as this attempt to encourage them to look inward and recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, and to deal rationally with the problems in their lives. It is often frustrating to us that they won't or can't see through their pain, and we feel as though we are of no help. It is important for those of us involved in peer support to not let this factor get us down and stop us from trying to help, for simply just "being

there" makes a remarkable difference to these women, despite what we might think. Offering our own history of dealing with our partner's dressing, combined with support and understanding and comfort truly does make a difference.

If we present ourselves as women of substance, of courage and strength and dignity, we become a formidable force in helping women in pain. A truly caring heart, a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen with are all weapons against the

pain enveloping our sisters. The women friends in my life who are involved in working with other women in this community are women of strength. They are completely at home with themselves and in their relationship, an equal partner, pursuing their own interests, prioritizing their lives, facing

adversities. They may be battle scarred, but they are the winners. They accept that life isn't always fair, that they may get a bum rap at times; yet, they hold their heads up and show the world how special they are. And, each of these women have the total support and admiration of their partners, who encourage their independence and growth.

These women are in their "goddess" era, much like Sandra is, and I am, too. The community needs women like us, and the community needs to become more proactive in encouraging women to establish support systems and serious outlets for the frustrations and pain often associated with being involved with a man who is gender-influenced. The community needs to recognize and acknowledge the work the strong women are doing, for they are making a difference.

More important, the community should encourage men to face the issues within their own relationships and make a real attempt to understand how their wives and partners really feel. Men should be encouraged to understand the boundaries that their partners need to have, and to live within those boundaries. Men need to look into their partner's hearts, and they need to listen with their hearts and not just with their ears. Their women should be cherished and cared for; yet, men should encourage their

So many of us women continue to live in the past, never realizing their potential, their uniqueness.

partners strengths and abilities. It is time that women stop living in the past, where they were second-class citizens and start living as vibrant, capable, strong human beings. And it is time that their husbands and partners stop being afraid, and thus encourage this growth, these steps out into the world. Men need to realize that this is no longer a "man's world;" instead, this is a world where men and women are equals, where a meeting of minds is as important as a meeting of hearts.

If men and women (and especially so, in this community) would work together, life would be far better and more productive for a lot of people. Relationships would be strengthened and prosper. All women should have the opportunity (and not "allowed" by their husbands!) to choose how they want to live their lives. Our "gender" community has a responsibility to encourage this and to make possible opportunities for women to learn how special they are, and to foster this growth. It is not enough to publish an occasional column or to advertise an event. A concerted effort amongst the major support organizations

is needed, without political involvement, to help women in the gender community reach that plateau, that "goddess" era. We can do it alone, but with the support of the community at large, we can do it much faster. I challenge the support organizations to help us ... **now**.

*[Linda Peacock is the Tri-Ess director of wives' and partners' concerns, an IFGE board member, and chair of the SPICE board of directors. She also publishes the quarterly newsletter for wives and partners The Sweetheart Connection, and may be reached by mail at P.O. Box 24031, Little Rock AR 72221 or by phone at (501) 227-8798.]*

**INSIGHT ... continued from page 16**

We as crossdressers desire the traits of the feminine far more than we do the clothes. The feminine clothes make us feel feminine, and that feeling of femininity is what we really seek.

Enjoy the fashion trend girls, but in the end do not lose sight of your true femininity. Whether in pants or skirts, be as feminine as you can be.

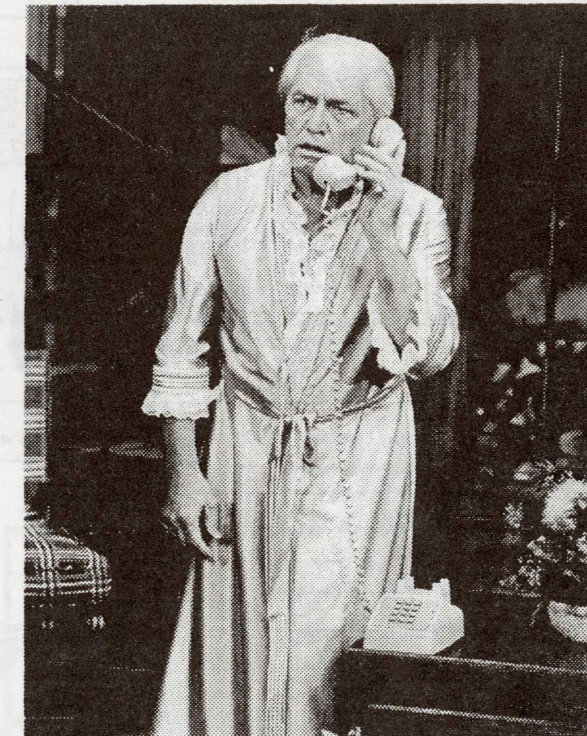
If you see a news article relating to the gender community, please send it to us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365, or fax it to us at (818) 347-4190.

# GREAT MOMENTS IN TV HISTORY

from the archives of Ralph Judd



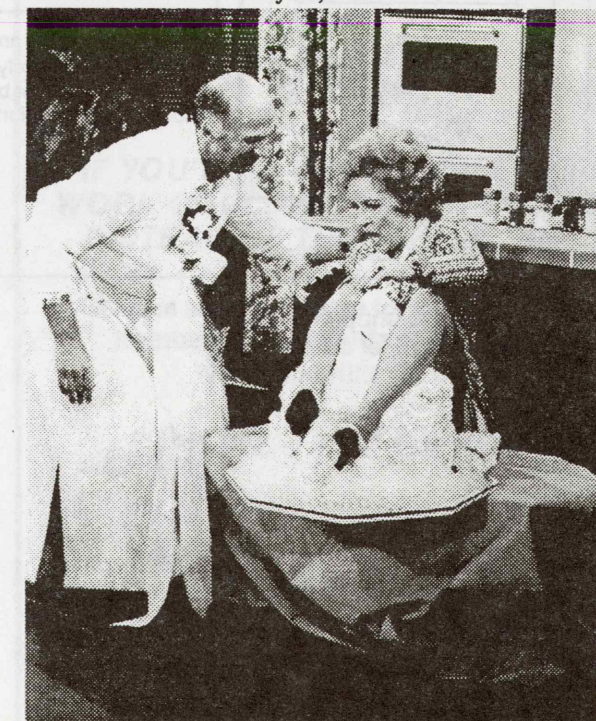
10/2/76: Carol (Marcia Wallace) dresses as Uncle Sam for Howard's Bicentennial party on *The Bob Newhart Show*, CBS.



2/16/82: Henry (Ted Knight) is stuck with his wife's robe after he mistakenly takes her maternity suitcase on a weekend skiing vacation on *Too Close For Comfort*, ABC.



3/21/64: Bilko (Phil Silvers) dons the guise of "Gladys Crump" to participate in a women's poker tournament on *The New Phil Silvers Show*, CBS.

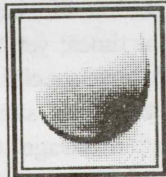


12/20/75: Murray (Gavin MacLeod)'s career as producer of WJM's "Happy Homemaker" show ends when, angered by having to act as Sue Ane Nivens' (Betty White) dress model, he dumps her into a three-tiered wedding cake on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, CBS.

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**ADS WE'D LIKE TO SEE** by Karen Rusnak

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**AND ANOTHER AD I'D LIKE TO SEE** by Ricky Hunt

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*A Few Seconds with: T.S. & C.D.* by Calie

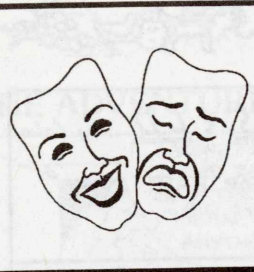
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## THE BEARDED LADY

### MRS. "I HAVE-MY-DOUBTS" FIRE

by Ricky Hunt  
Illustration by Rita

By the time this sees print the movie will probably be relegated to videotape and pay-per-view, but I have to mount my soapbox and comment on *Mrs. Doubtfire*. I enjoyed the movie, but only the superb talent of Robin Williams saved it from one of the most awful scripts ever to emerge from Hollywood. After the first five minutes I started counting cliches and stereotypes but before another five minutes past I had run out of fingers, toes and other appendages to keep count. Sadly, I had to include how many times Mrs. Doubtfire scratched, clutched or adjusted her own concealed appendage.

written form for a classified ad (haven't they ever heard of a telephone?) ... the ability to pee through a bodysuit standing up ... high speed changes in and out of a latex mask and massive undergarments in a public bathroom ... bags left in a public bathroom that are still there when you return ... and how did an unemployed actor working as a shipping clerk and nanny find the time and money to turn a dump into a showplace?

The movie suffers mostly from a bad case of "what could have been". Just about every character in it is a parody or tired stereotype: The gay brother and his partner, the old prune social worker and the swinging boyfriend. In almost every instance the writers opt for the low road: The tired sight gag, singed falsies and other such drivel. But all that pales before the arrested character development. Let's face it, the Williams male character is a thoughtless meatball. He's loving and generous when he wants to be, but with no discipline or sense of proportion ... he always does the wrong thing for the right reason.

So what happens when he becomes Mrs. Doubtfire? The role brings out all the good parts of his personality while suppressing the parts that always lead to trouble. Mrs. Doubtfire develops, gains poise and sensitivity and starts to grow up.

So far it sounds like any one of a dozen articles you have read about how leaving the male persona behind frees you to explore your feminine side and discover things about yourself you have never known. Maybe the scriptwriters should have been reading **Cross-Talk** Just as you think something good will come of this, the script calls for a highly contrived

situation where both the male and female personas must be at the same place at the same time.

The scene works as slapstick -- almost -- but the details are so glaringly wrong to any crossdresser. Mrs. D proves unable to refuse too many drinks and loses track of which role she is in ... and off we go into low comedy. All ends well, however, and the female role gets a job from all the shenanigans, but they are all still the same schmucks. Perhaps I ask too much. I was hoping for more, for that elusive blending that produces a balanced character. I was hoping someone, anyone, would learn to *(continued, page 31)*

## TRAVESTI/TRANSEXUALE = TRANSVESTITE/TRANSSEXUAL

by Phaedra Kelly

It is only for a percentage of our entire community that we promote the awareness of TV heterosexuality and TS hetero-by-abstract of reality through surgery. If one wishes to insist that they are so pure that butter wouldn't melt between their thighs, I would tell them that while they may have in truth started snow white, they have also in truth drifted, and that to pretend otherwise and prejudice others on that basis is hypocritical.

Hypocrisy must be self-defeating in order that we can fight it from outside as well as inside.

In the '70s I met many people from so-called hetero groups who in private were anything but hetero, representing themselves to their wives as something beyond bisexual but more akin to polymorphous perversity or amoral sexuality regardless of gender. Not that I condemn their lifestyle, only their hypocrisy.

Be true to yourself and you will be true to all others. We have all considered our sexuality far more than most outsiders, precisely because of the constant challenge to it ... and we have all decided what we are on the

gender identity scale, yet sexuality appears to have a constant undulation and -- dependent on circumstances and chance -- can still surprise us with the sudden appearance in our life of the "right" wrong person.

I agree with what has been said in these pages on more than one occasion by our managing editor, that most of the "contact" ads are for "she-male" whores, attracting men with the powerful sensualism of words overexploited by tabloids writing "stop-it-I-like-it" smut about us all. But stop to think that at least these male women are free in the U.S. to a) make that choice and b) engage in it freely through the relatively safe medium of the "contact" ad, rather than standing on a street corner risking many perils, as is common for a Travesti sister in a Third World country.

The Travesti sister may have been gay, bi, hetero, TV fetishist or natural hormone imbalance TS. It doesn't matter; once her nature forced her "out" she had only one option: Travesti whore.

If a gay Travesti uses her transformation to attract the curiously bisexual lover, she doesn't need surgery; it would kill her in the end, one way or another. If she is hetero, being a whore is frightening and painful to her; if bi, she might have -- in a more informed world -- have taken a wife or female lover; if TS, she would prefer to remain pure until after her surgery. Yet none knew of these options, except from vague hints through the media, and her inner feeling of despair closed her mind to these. I know, from IGTA missions to such places as Turkey and

Greece, that once aware of the situation outside the Third World, that they are angry at not having the choice not to be a whore.

Yet our Travesti sisters see themselves as gay, not by our definition, but because the sexuality attitude in these countries is "he who gives is straight, he/she who takes is gay", and it is only through transformation that any polarity (or hetero-through-abstract reality) is achieved.

The fact is that it is through the reality of the existence of human dualism and its need to operate at a different frequency by each individual, that any of us exist at all. It follows that frequencies differ further within our world communities, and that those Travesti who transform to survive are not that far removed from what we call TV, TS

**Hypocrisy must be self-defeating in order that we can fight it from outside as well as inside.**

or TG.

If you were to look at and touch a Third World Travesti, smelled her perfume, looked into her beautiful eyes with their long lashes, watched her sensual movement, your heterosexual tendencies would go into overdrive and you would long with all your heart to be her man. If you are afraid of that and burn with guilt just at the thought of it, then at least be honest about it and help from a distance, truthfully and effectively. Find those who are less worried about it, who will better understand your Travesti sister (use the "contact" mags, if you would), and who have more options -- although unaware of them -- than you or those I tell you of.

Liaison between those you find in your own world and those in the Third World who lack the options. Only by helping each other not despite but because of our differences can we show by good example the hypocrisy of those who would perpetrate a genocide of self-interest on our entire nation within nations.

*[Phaedra Kelly is the director of International Gender Transient Affinity, 1 Bank Buildings, School Green Road, Freshwater Isle Of Wight PO40 9AJ, U.K.]*

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# REVIVING THE TRADITION OF ALTERNATIVE GENDER

by Holly Boswell

Contemporary societies still seem determined to polarize gender along strict anatomical lines, even though the vast majority of cultures throughout history and around the globe understood that anatomical sex doesn't dictate gender identification any more than it does sexual orientation. Gender isn't black or white, masculine or feminine, but a glorious rainbow of possibilities. Ancient Goddess religions and other natural spiritual world views respected men and women as equals, regarded Nature as divine, revered **diversity** and loved all manifestations of life.

Since the replacement of Mother Nature with God the Father (about five thousand years ago), the constructs of gender have been defined more narrowly and rigidly to suit the purposes of those in control of each particular society. Ancient people before this era apparently knew that such traits as sensitivity and nurturance were not exclusive to females, nor aggressiveness and competitiveness exclusive to males. A more recent example is that up until World War I in the United States, pink was for boys and blue was for girls. Just how arbitrary are our notions of gender, anyway?

Psychologists today acknowledge that androgyny -- one's personal blending of so-called masculine and feminine traits -- is the healthiest model for self-actualization and fulfillment. This entails a process of unlearning our social conditioning in order to more fully become our own unique selves. C.G. Jung called this process "individualization" and recognized that a reconciliation with one's inner contrasexual energy (the feminine "anima" in men, and masculine "animus" in women) was the key to "wholeness" -- a word that is related to health and holiness. If most people were honest about it, they would probably find themselves in the middle of the bell-curve of gender rather than the Rambo-Bimbo extremes.

While many people have androgynous potential, the tradition of a "third sex" involves a minority within whom these tendencies are much more pronounced. These are the truly transgendered, who have profound difficulty conforming to the polarized codes of gender, and whose gender identities stray far beyond the normal expectations of their sex. Such people are too often unaware that they have a strong, persistent tradition of their predecessors; the *berdache* in Native North America, *shamans* in Siberia and the Arctic, *hijiras* in India, *xanith* in the Middle East, *gallae* in the Roman Empire, certain Druid priestesses in Old Europe, the *mahu* of Polynesia, one-breasted amazons, and many more. These were people who commonly

assumed the roles of spiritual leaders, mediators, teachers, visionaries and healers. But where are we now? If the intuitive knowledge within this tradition is correct, that there is an abundance of transgendered people being born during this period of time to help restore balance and heal our troubled planet, what are we doing? Do we need a "wake up call"?

Because of western civilization's emphasis on materialism and its inherent polarization, most transgendered people are manifesting as their assumed opposite, either through crossdressing or sex reassignment surgery. This is often motivated more by a need to assimilate than a quest toward truly becoming oneself, which would otherwise revive the forgotten "oddity" of a third sex.

**Alternative gender is a distinct neitherness where spirit takes precedence over form.**

Alternative gender may be regarded as a composite of masculine and feminine traits, but is essentially unique unto itself ... a distinct neitherness, where spirit takes precedence over form. Whereas crossdressing may vicariously lead to gender insights, and transsexualism appropriately correct those who see their gender/anatomy variance as a problem, transgenderism (in its full sense) can lead to a potent activation of new and healthy **alternative gender** expression. Gender is, after all, a psychosocial construct, rather than mere physicalization. If we, the transgendered, were to truly follow our spiritual longings, where might they lead? Indeed, how might we ideally transform ourselves **and** our culture? If we were to more effectively express our unique truth and beauty to those in our daily lives as well as the media that sensationalizes us, what might we accomplish? **Gender liberation** is a crucial key to human evolution, promoting the idea that we should strive to be "whole-gendered", cultivating **all** our gender traits to meet the critical challenges of our time.

Rather than a "call to arms", can we not accept our personal gender challenges as a "call to heart"? If perhaps we only have this one lifetime, can we not live it with honesty and compassion ... for ourselves as well as our loved ones? Aren't we all, after all, a blessing and not a curse?

Let us live our lives with love and joy, and may our grace radiate throughout the worlds of all being.

[Reprinted with permission from the newsletter of Phoenix Transgendered Support, Asheville NC.]

# ROGER'S (WIFE'S) NOTEBOOK

by Victoria K. Powell

[Editor's Note: In the days and weeks since the death of Roger Peo, Ph.D., who wrote the "Roger's Notebook" column that appeared in **Cross-Talk**, Tapestry, Renaissance News, and countless group newsletters, I have had the opportunity to talk with Roger's widow Victoria on several occasions. In our conversations, we frequently spoke of our individual memories of Roger ... hers as loving wife, mine as friend and editor. Recently she decided to share her thoughts with the community in this article, which is appearing simultaneously this month in **Cross-Talk** and Renaissance News & Views.]

In the spirit of *Roger's Notebook* and as Roger's wife, I would like to share with the community two philosophies that Roger felt the transgendered culture may want to continue to integrate into their lifestyle and culture. They are unity and the acceptance of one's sexuality.

Roger felt that unity is an important factor to the success of the community. I think this may be summed up by a letter from a crossdresser who wrote to Roger expressing his feelings that "we are our own worst enemy". His meaning was that the disparity that surfaces in the community is destructive and acts to divide -- and ultimately diffuse -- the concerns. Roger would have liked the community to come together under a united banner that can share differences and be enriched by them.

The acceptance of one's sexuality is a bit more complex and I will illustrate by example, just as Roger often did. In the transgendered culture -- particularly the transvestite or crossdresser -- there appears to be a denial of personal sexuality. When this happens, the desire to emulate the female gender takes on an anti-sexual fascination, focusing just on the visual image. The male's self-sexuality tends not to be integrated because it is not identified as normal under the circumstances. Therein lies the conflict that many crossdressers encounter. The linking of the feminine clothing and image to the socialization and the sexuality imprint of the "Man". Roger would have liked each person to reach inside the psyche and celebrate one's own expression of sexuality. This is a personal struggle that each person must wage on his own terms; however,

compromise is a necessary ingredient too, especially in relationships.

Roger would have wanted all persons -- male and female -- in this transgendered sphere to be happy with themselves and to realize their true sexuality by listening to their hearts and reaching out for help in both the community and the professional environment.

Just one last note about Roger. Not many persons in the transgendered field knew of Roger's "other" profession as a respected senior engineer at IBM for 33 years. His degrees in physics and engineering enabled him to work on patents, computer designs and projects, and to act as an international liaison for IBM.

Roger's memorial celebration on April 14 was attended by persons from the wide spectrum that was Roger's life. I asked seven persons to speak, addressing his diverse interests. I asked Dr. Sheila Kirk to represent the transgender community and I am grateful for her most gracious and dignified words. In closing, I would like to share a comment by one of Roger's colleagues from IBM, who said "and I thought he belonged to us ..." I thought that a very poignant statement to describe Roger. I believe that he belonged to **all** of "us", and he would like this remembrance.

[You may contact Victoria at P.O. Box 3445, Poughkeepsie NY 12603. Copyright 1994 by Victoria K. Powell. This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if the name and address information is included. Other publications must obtain written approval. A copy of any reprint should be sent to Victoria.]

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# PASSING THOUGHTS ON BLENDING IN

by Rebecca Auge, Ph.D.

The practical matters involved in "passing" often arouse some degree of anxiety and fear in persons formally diagnosed as TS, those who may believe they are TS, and a certain subset of CDs. I want to offer this column as a springboard for generating a discussion of this important and sometimes difficult to discuss topic.

The following was composed by a client I saw in therapy about five years ago. I offer it here with some minor editing and with her permission. Some of these items apply to women or men while others apply to women only.

**Effective passing is a workable combination of the correct or situationally appropriate behavior and appearance.**

These suggestions may be helpful to you if you get turned off (and not turned on) by being "read" in public settings. If you feel any of these ideas are silly, or plain stupid, just sigh deeply and move on to the next one, or propose an alternative way of looking at things.

To begin then:

1. Effective passing is a workable combination of the correct or situationally appropriate behavior and appearance, in other words, actions, clothing, makeup, etc. (Wow, is that abstract!) Your ability to relax, feel good about yourself, and blend with your environment is especially important. Attitude helps a lot! A person who sees or meets you for the first time wants to be able to quickly classify you as male or female. If you're ambiguous or present conflicting cues expect to make people curious and/or anxious. If a person can't quickly and comfortably classify you into one of these two categories they'll spend extra time searching your "image" until they're able to come up with enough cues to make a classification and reduce their discomfort, satisfy their curiosity, etc. They may even ask for assistance in identifying you from someone who is with them. Once they know your gender (they'll probably think of it as "sex," but you'll be wearing clothes ... so they won't really know your sex) then they know how to respond to you; for example, whether to flirt or not to flirt! The worse thing that could happen would be for someone not to precisely know your gender and then make an error in relating to you. This could summon their deepest homosexual fears and send them into a tizzy, perhaps, creating some kind of scene on the very spot, pronto. Maybe they'll have a seizure, or hemorrhage, or something worse. Spare the public this potential trauma. Find the

right cues to feed them!

2. If passing is your goal you must first deal effectively with any distracting hair problems you may have, especially facial and other head hair problems. That may mean electrolysis and a good quality hairpiece or wig ... or moving to Iran and wearing a veil.

3. You may do best (and learn a lot about styles and how they change, too) if you strive to match "the average woman (or man)" in dressing and behavior for your location, age, size, etc. I know you're above average, but you'll just have to pretend! You may pass better dressing-down as compared to dressing-up.

4. It's better to err on the conservative side in clothing, shoes, and makeup. For example, skirts or dresses knee-length or longer will attract less attention. Leave the tight skirts to Tina Turner unless you've got the legs, hips, and butt to fill one ... and you're prepared to handle the attention a tight or short skirt generates!

5. Conservative, but "in-style," footwear will work best. Comfortable footwear makes a natural, gender appropriate walk easier. A shoe color that matches or blends with your hose and fits your overall outfit will draw less attention to your feet. Sandals can be quite comfortable, stylish, and make for easy walking. They also have a long season, especially here in California. Sandals, however, may not work that well for business or professional women.

6. Avoid heavy, especially dark, eye makeup; for example, black eyeliner on your lower lids, gloppy mascara, etc. Go ahead, if it helps you get into your streetwalker fantasy ... but for your safety and health, though, let's hope it's just a fantasy and nothing more. Don't expect heavy eye makeup to go over real dandy at your local mall unless, maybe, you're a fourteen-year-old or fixing to catch yourself a man. And yes, some men you'll catch you'll want to throw back in the pond.

7. Easy does it on jewelry! A few pieces of good or better quality jewelry may work best for you. Stay away from cheap costume jewelry unless you want to be a girl clown. Get dressed up, look the situation over, and then take a piece off (maybe two pieces for you, Laverne).

8. Pierced earrings or clip-ons that imitate pierced ears will help create the needed effect. Drop or dangling earrings don't look good with glasses (unless you're in Oklahoma); stick to studs or button earrings. Not wearing earrings is almost as serious as not carrying a purse ... or not having a Visa card!

9. Shorter hair styles tend to be preferred by women as they mature. Few professional women over 40 wear their

hair below their shoulders. But, as you know, almost all men like long hair on women. You may want to avoid the "big hair" look, too.

10. Tall women typically look best in longer hairstyles, for example, shoulder length. Short hair will make a tall woman look even taller. Conversely, short women look shorter with long hair and taller with short hair. And remember, no hair will make a woman look like Yul Brynner ... or just plain bald!

11. Avoid garish clothing combinations. Learn to put an outfit together. Learn what styles and colors work best for you. One of the neat things about a nice dress is you don't have to find a skirt and blouse combination that works (unless you're one of those folks who wear several outfits at the same time). If you want to look like a caricature of a woman, or a clown, go to a drag party or waddle off and join a circus.

12. Mind your own business when in public. Avoid unnecessary eye contact. If you're tall, learn to recognize the difference between attracting attention because you're tall, and visually striking, vs. getting read because your dress and/or behavior is not congruent with others' expectations. If you make nervous, wasteful eye contact you may make yourself and others anxious and, perhaps, suspicious. If you make a lot of nervous eye gestures while in a store you might feel you're being read because others are watching you, especially clerks, while actually they may be checking you out, to see if you're a shoplifter. On the other hand, make eye contact with salespeople, when appropriate and needed.

13. Practice walking a little slower than you might ordinarily walk. Keep your feet and knees reasonably close together. Walk by placing one foot in front of the other. Point your toes; avoid a duck or pigeon walk. You don't have to walk exactly like a fashion model, but an approximation to that style and less of a walk like a lumberjack or chimpanzee may help.

14. If your hands tend to be on the large side, rings, nail polish, vampire nails, etc. will draw attention to them. So be careful. You don't want a stake through your heart, especially while shopping at Nordstroms or Bloomingdales! Also, if you do have large hands, carry a large purse.

15. If your legs are still muscular from your days on the Celtics (or was it the Lakers?) wear darker colored hose; i.e., blacks, grays, or the darker flesh tones. Some people may want to wear two pairs. (I'm not talking about four legged folks here.) Also, black shoes generally go best with black hose. Stay away from black hose and those white or red pumps that light up your feet! Also, remember, for the most part, white hose were made for ten year olds on Easter Sunday.

16. Some clothing is almost always in style, for almost anyone; for instance, a nice medium length skirt. On the other hand, certain other clothes are currently out-of-style

or don't look good for some reason, for example, a miniskirt on most 35+-year-old women. If you wear '50s or '60s style clothing in 1994 you may attract attention you don't want. So determine what you want and find out what works best for you.

17. If you need or want plastic surgery you may want to use your money and time for something that will more immediately help you pass, perhaps a nose or jaw job or apple shave rather than breast implants. On the other hand, if implants will help you feel significantly better about yourself and raise your self-esteem, then they're probably worth it. Ask lots of questions. Check around, talk to others who have had this work, and get the best surgeon you can.

18. Work on your voice if you intend to talk to people. Practice with a tape recorder, shadow women talking on radio and TV, get an evaluation and recommendations from a speech and voice specialist. Call 800 numbers for free practice talking to people on the phone. If your work involves lots of talking on the phone with clients, business associates, etc, you'll want to get your phone voice together real quick. You'll probably also want to learn how to sneeze, cough, and laugh in a gender congruent way. If you don't intend to talk to people you might want to consider moving to another planet or hop in your time machine and be a silent movie actress.

In addition, don't forget to work on your nonverbal behavior, that is, eye contact, posture, hand and facial expressions, etc. which are very important parts of communicating your gender in face-to-face conversations. If you can learn to feel comfortable talking to a person one-to-one it can be the basis on which future relationships are built. This face-to-face relating to another

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person can often be developed as you work with a good therapist in building your presentation as a woman or man over a period of months or even several years.

19. Exercise and workout! You'll be healthier, look better in your clothes, and feel better about yourself. Regular exercise can help reduce stress and depression, too.

20. You may be fat, short, tall, or not particularly beautiful, but you may still pass if you work at the essentials and have enough time and money (for electrolysis, etc.) to take the steps that becoming a woman or man involves. Looking like a Bozo is much easier than building a workable image or presentation. It's trite but true, women and men come in all shapes, sizes, and styles. There may very well be a look that will work for you. Search for it.

21. Practice will produce improvement. Socialize and grow. You'll get better with experience. Stay at home and stay where you are! Set small achievable goals for yourself. Be patient. Go slow. Be realistic. Be kind to your self. Revise plans as needed. If something you do doesn't work, don't do it again. Do something new. Always have a Plan A and a Plan B.

22. If you look as good as you can, or reasonably close to it, and feel good about yourself, you'll enhance your chances of doing well in public. A licensed therapist, well experienced in the gender area, might be able to help you understand yourself, assess your motivation, and assist you in formulating goals and developing plans. Ask yourself: Given what I've got, and what's possible for me, what do I need to do to develop my potential and maximize my image? You may find that you can fit in and, in the process, build yourself a better life.

23. When things go well for you say something nice to yourself, give yourself a word or two of praise, produce a positive thought. Give yourself compliments and avoid destructive forms of self-criticism. Occasionally, give yourself some sort of treat, maybe even buy yourself something! Work at reducing those negative or critical thoughts. You've probably already had much more than your share of negative or critical comments in your life from others, who don't understand you. Don't add to them. Spend time with people who treat you well and appreciate

you. If things don't go as well as you would like, learn from your mistakes, then produce positive change. Talk things over with friends. Setbacks occur for everyone. Bounce back, get on track.

24. You might want to learn to practice meditation at home as another way to help you relax and reduce stress when you're out in public. Use a phrase that includes your name as your mantra, for instance, "Relax Rhonda," (of course, if your name is Ruby Begonia, just say "Relax Ruby"). Then repeat that phrase to yourself when you're in a public setting when you feel a little tense or anxious. You'll relax, feel a lot better, and gain even more control of your life.

So here's one person's view of this territory. Your view may be different. Also, notice the author uses the words "pass" or "passing" in the list above. How do you feel about this? Is it better to think of striving to "blend" with other women or men? What's the difference between "passing" and "blending?" What do these two words mean to you?

I'd love to have you add to this list. The preceding is just a start. Share your experience and creativity! I'm confident people ranging from beginners to those living full time in their preferred gender roles for years all have something to add. I'll bet this list can be hundreds of items long and terrifically helpful to people.

In addition, what would a list exclusively devoted to F2M people be like?

*[Copyright 1994 Rebecca Auge, Ph.D. Dr. Auge is a clinical psychologist in Oakland, Calif., and may be contacted at 3637 Grand Avenue Suite C, Oakland 94610, by phone at (510) 835-9820, or via Internet at rebeccaauge@aol.com.]*

#### HAVE YOU HAD A REAL-LIFE ADVENTURE THAT OTHERS CAN LEARN FROM?

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## YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR?

by Rebecca Anne Petersen

In an article in our group newsletter, I once made reference to the fact that it was nice to be in the company of some CDs that were not worried about the superficial, or the "how they looked" aspect of crossdressing. When asked what they saw in the mirror when dressed, they responded with the feelings derived, rather than the physical image the mirror returned to them.

It has been brought to my attention, however, that the basic reason for crossdressing is purely a physical image situation. After giving this subject much thought, I must agree with this statement. We crossdress to create a physical image that is different than our normal male image. I don't think many of us would continue crossdressing if, after all the paint, powder and clothing were applied, we looked exactly the same as we did prior to starting the ritual. The feeling of feminine attire is one thing, but I believe it is far surpassed by the image that is returned from a mirror. I have often wondered if there are any blind crossdressers in existence.

If, in reality, we dress to create an image that is different or more attractive than our male image, then it would not be unusual to be concerned about the superficial. Most will admit to the fact that their female self is more attractive than their male self, at least in their own minds.

This also would not be unusual, since society has always told us that the female is the more attractive of the two sexes. Unfortunately this is the misconception of a great number of males and is not a true assessment of the total picture. A woman finds great attraction in a man. In fact, it would be safe to assume that women find men just as attractive as we find women.

Since we may assume that a great number of CDs are trying to create a feminine image that "may" be more attractive than their male image, then heavy importance is placed upon physical appearance. The feminine image that is adopted is created from a male viewpoint, however. What we as males find attractive in a female becomes of prime concern in the creation of our feminine image, at least from a physical standpoint. No consideration is given to this image, other than from a physical appearance standpoint.

Taking this theory into consideration, we could wind up with middle-aged men dressed as teenage girls. Or a respectable man dressed like a hooker. A 20-year-old girl in a micro-mini and three-inch heels is an attractive sight, especially to a middle aged man. If that man is a CD, there is the possibility he will try to emulate that 20-year-old-girl, since it was a pleasurable sight. He gives little

consideration to his age or his physical build.

For years I searched for an explanation as to why I crossdressed. After many wordy explanations, I had another CD break it down to the lowest common denominator of two words ... "It's fun". That's pretty much it: We dress because it's fun and it produces a great amount of pleasure. Taking this into consideration, what I or anyone else chooses to wear is of no concern to anyone else. This, of course, assumes that it is a controlled environment, such as in the home or at a CD function.

**What we as males find attractive in a female becomes of prime concern in the creation of our feminine image, at least from a physical standpoint.**

What is appropriate for home or a CD function may not be for the general public.

In the past, I have been criticized by other CDs (yes, even me) for dressing a bit too flamboyant. I will even admit to the fact that I dress on the flamboyant side. But you must take into consideration that these people saw me at CD functions, not the local mall, or some restaurant. For those situations, I dress appropriately in jeans, etc. Remember we dress for the reason of enjoyment, so why not dress the way that pleases you, when in a controlled situation?

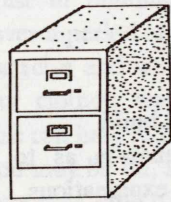
We as humans also make snap decisions about others based on their physical appearance. As CDs, we are no different in this snap decision-making process. We as men make decisions on a woman's sexuality based on how she dresses. Don't deny it; at one time or another, you probably have made a statement something like, "Wow, look how short that skirt is, I'll bet she's easy." Maybe she is, but then again, maybe she dresses the way she does because it pleases her.

As humans -- taking the CD aspect out of it -- most people dress in a style that pleases them. I will agree that there are exceptions to this rule. For example, street walkers dress to attract clientele. Both males and females will at times dress to attract a member of the opposite sex, but if sex is not the reason, you will usually find that most dress to either be stylish, comfortable, or to just feel good about themselves.

Don't be too quick to judge, because what you see, is not necessarily what you get, especially in the case of the CD.

*[Reprinted with permission from the newsletter of the Sierra Silver Belles (Sigma Sigma Beta Chapter, Tri-Ess, South Lake Tahoe CA. Ms. Petersen is SSB's newsletter editor.)*





## THE BEST OF CROSS-TALK

### THE MAGIC OF CROSSDRESSING

by Wendi Seabreeze

What is it about our affinity for the feminine essence of life that attracts so? The sweet aromas stimulate our minds and hearts so that we become enthralled. The soft textures and colors of a pretty dress, the hot look of a sexy dress, or the scent of a lovely perfume, stimulates our natural senses with which we become mesmerized. The stirring sights and or experience of wearing glittering gems and metals, awakens our souls, whereby we become unconsciously enraptured and enlightened!

Have you ever noticed how some of our loving sisters are always wearing pearls, or some of them most often wear sapphires or amethyst? Some of your sisters prefer gold, while others love silver or copper. Why are we partial to a certain gem or metal? Good question, right? Well, in simple terms, some

**When your own body wears a piece of jewelry it can harmonize with, then those vibes will make you feel better.**

jewelry just feels better on us than other pieces do. I guess the keyword here is "feel" if I were to try and explain that sensation. "Feel" isn't just the sense of touch or sight. Feel encompasses the finer forces of nature that are invisible to the eye. "Feel" can be described by the science of physics. However, if I began to explain how a particle or wave affects our inner-being, you might get bored and not finish reading his article. So, I'll simple state that everything ever created by nature or man, sends out vibrations (vibes) that are perceived by our astral-like senses. When your own body wears a piece of jewelry that it can harmonize with, then those vibes will make you "feel" better. If you wear a piece of jewelry that your etheric body cannot harmonize with, then you may "feel" uneasy, or anxious about anything, or you might even "feel" upset, angered, or like a wandering puppy.

Think about it! Isn't it funny how some costume jewelry just seems to be there. But if you wear a genuine gem like a diamond or emeralds or even jade, or if you wear real gold, you can actually "feel" extra special. If you've never felt this way before, then you're missing out on a real feminine treat.

Within this article I'll share some information concerning which gems and metals may be right for you. This won't be based on any astrological forecast, but I must use the date

of your birth to categorize your personal vibes. I'll also give you your best day of the week that you'd probably feel more comfortable in your femme attire, and if you like to travel, notice that I've also listed a city somewhere in the world where you might feel right at home in.

**(Dec. 21 - Jan. 19)** Realistic sisters born between these dates would probably enjoy wearing lapis lazuli set in heavy marcasite, or garnet in gold. Your fun day of the

week is Saturday and if you're ever in Oxford, England or Brussels, Belgium, you may never wish to leave.

**(Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)** The determined girl of this time zone should own at least one ring, bracelet, or necklace of silver with sapphire gems or amethyst.

Your best day of the week is also

on Saturday. Someday you just have to visit Hamburg, Germany, or Salzburg, Austria.

**(Feb. 19 - Mar. 20)** You spiritual babes should own some aquamarine or turquoise set in silver. If you can ever purchase a platinum bracelet, do it! Try going out more on a Thursday night, and what fun you'd have in Alexandria, Egypt, or maybe Seville, Spain!

**(Mar. 21 - Apr. 19)** You ... the mistress-of-illusion know all about diamonds, for it's your gem. You like your metal around your neck to be heavy like gold and iron. Next Tuesday try being your feminine-self, it may be a pleasant surprise. Certainly, someday you must travel to Florence, Italy, or Marseilles, France.

**(Apr. 20 - May 20)** You earthy Hippie girls in all your jade, aren't you feeling high? But don't restrict yourself to just jade, try emeralds too with copper jewelry. And hey, you rule the Friday night air, so don't neglect it. Where are you going on your next vacation? Maybe Palermo, Spain.

**(May 21 - June 20)** For you, the girl on the go, wear Beryl or Alexandrine set in sterling silver. And isn't it a funny thing about Wednesday, they're perfect for you! And hey, when was the last time you visited San Francisco? You might be surprised with all the adventure you'd find there.

**(June 21 - July 22)** Yes!!!! We moonbabies are the cute

sissies in our moonstone and pearls. If we don't wear silver, there's no way we can get out on a Monday night. If you're looking to travel this year, try Amsterdam, Holland. Or for a real adventure visit New York City.

**(July 23 - Aug. 22)** I can see the fire in the eyes of these girls, adorned in all that gold and bright dazzling ruby stones. You rule Sunday nights where all attention will be on you. Someday in your life you need to visit Bombay, India or Bath, England!

**(Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)** Someone told me a lot about you girls, that you are still virgins, my oh my. I couldn't believe that seeing you in all that Peridot and agate set in silver, I also know you've been invading the Wednesday night atmosphere. Your romance is waiting for you in Paris, France, or Hollywood, California.

**(Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)** You girls always seem to be cheerful and balanced wearing all your opal and zircon. You also love the feel of copper and know how to party on a Friday night. Vienna, Austria has a lot to offer, and Johannesburg, South Africa calls for your justice.

**(Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)** You are indeed a regenerated girl in your onyx and malachite stones. There's something about the touch of steel that you can't explain. But you go out to rule the Tuesday night tiptoeing scene. Everything seems to fall into place for you. New Orleans is where you gotta visit.

**(Nov. 21 - Dec. 20)** The girls with a goal! That's what you are as you show off your topaz. You love to wear light jewelry like items made of tin. You too may find new found pleasures on a Thursday night. And if you ever plan a vacation, try the infamous Cologne, Germany or Avignon, France.

Well, dear readers, I hope this little bit of information will be useful for you, or that you at least find it interesting. As a student of many schools of thought, I'll tell you that the marvelous joys to be found by wearing real gems, can help elevate your awareness of your world.

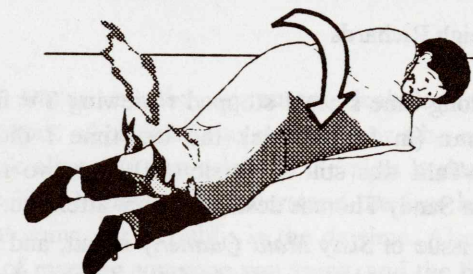
[Originally published in Cross-Talk #36, July 1992.]

#### THE BEARDED LADY ... continued from page 22

be a better person, male or female. Maybe even the message that men in dresses are not to be dismissed out of hand. But the ending is painfully trite, forced and hopeful, and since no one has changed the problems will just start over again when the camera is turned off.

So enough of the social analysis (blame it on being married to a social worker). Go rent the movie if you haven't seen it already. It may not live up to its potential, but watching Mrs. Doubtfire play the air guitar while cleaning is worth the price of admission alone.

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## 'ZINE REVIEWS!

by Kimberleigh Richards

It's been a long time since I stopped reviewing TV fiction in this column (in fact, I think the last time I did was when *Cross-Talk* was still a newsletter!), but two recent releases from Sandy Thomas deserve special attention.

The second issue of *Sissy Maid Quarterly* is out, and while I've never understood the appeal of this genre, there is apparently a large constituency of crossdressers for whom this is a very powerful fantasy. Sandy first appealed to this element with the 1991 novel *Maid Up* and continued with last year's three-part *Maid In Form* and two-part *Sissy Maid Academy* stories. The author of the 1993 books is the primary author and illustrator for *SMQ*.

It's actually pretty cute, with all the "articles" written from a perspective that suspends reality by presuming the existence of such things as sissy maid academies and female employers who employ such feminized male help. The table of contents lists topics such as summer fashion ... the best maid uniforms and rompers for "play" on the "day off"; how to best mix boyfriends and sissy maids in an employer's life; heel heights for maids; and advice to maids on how to hand-wash lingerie and properly scrub pots and pans.

Like I said, I don't get it ... but if you do, this is well done.



Sandy came out with the first edition of the *Transformation* comic book last year with an engaging tale of a man who, about to die in an accident, has his consciousness mysteriously transferred to his sister's body. That issue had as a filler an "Archie" style cartoon featuring "Tebby the Teen-Age Transvestite".

Tebby takes center stage in the second edition, telling the tale of her transformation by a rich girl who "decided to make a young lady out of her boyfriend". While it's an okay tale, I'm more looking forward to some of the future storylines hinted at in the first few pages.

However, the second tale in this book really got my attention. It features a Batman-type character, Nightman, who has his mind switched into his female adversary's body by a then-destroyed "mind-exchange gun". Without destroying the plot, suffice it to say that as he adapts to being a woman, he decides not to try to find a way back to his own body. I think there's a sequel in the works there, too ...

The book also features a cute second "Tebby" cartoon.

[*Sissy Maid Quarterly* #2, \$12; *Transformation* #2, \$10 from Sandy Thomas Advertising, P.O. Box 2309, Capistrano Beach CA 92624-2309, or from most CD-oriented boutiques or mail order book stores.]



As *Cross-Talk* becomes more and more well-known as a source of information on transgender issues, we also find ourselves listed in a lot of resource guides. I've mentioned several in this column, such as *Factsheet 5* and Richard Kadrey's *Covert Culture Sourcebook*, which I reviewed her last month.

We've also been included in the first edition of the *Alternative Lifestyles Directory* which was released this summer, and the publisher sent a review copy when it came off the press.

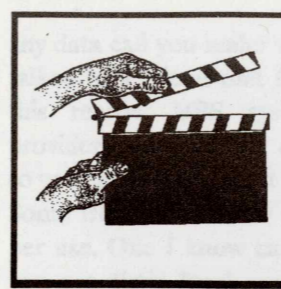
The directory concentrates on publications (unlike resource guides like *The Black Book* which predominantly list business and mail-order sources). A number of alternative sexualities and gender expressions are represented; those particularly of interest to the gender community include adult babies, queer 'zines, hirsute women, S/M B/D and related fetishes, and TV/TS (which lists 16 titles all by itself). The directory itself is alphabetized by title, with a subject section in the front listing all titles for a specific lifestyle interest and the page number for each publication's listing. In addition, the subject header is reproduced above each individual listing for further verification to the reader. There's also an section in the back listing titles that didn't send information on their magazines, but it's of little use since they didn't include "last known address" data.

Otherwise, my only complaint is that they misspelled my name in our listing. It has over 200 listings (my guess; I didn't count them) and the publisher hopes to update it twice a year.

[\$5 per issue from Winter Publishing, P.O. Box 80099, Dartmouth MA 02748-0099.]



Our friend and occasional contributing writer Laura Masters put the publisher of a new 'zine called *It's Okay!*, which concentrates on sexuality, sex, self-esteem and disability and is hoping to add transgender perspectives in future issues. The publisher, Linda Crabtree, is adding *Cross-Talk* to her upcoming booklet (continued, next page)



## MOVIE REVIEW

### JUST LIKE A WOMAN

by Charlene Day

In this movie, Gerald (Adrian Pasdar), an American banker living in London and working on a half-billion-dollar deal with a Japanese company is thrown out by his wife who returns home early from a trip and discovers women's underwear and clothes in her bedroom. She thinks he is having an affair with another woman and won't let him explain -- nor most likely would she understand -- that the clothes are his and he is a transvestite (or the term I prefer, a crossdresser).

He ends up renting a room from Monica (Julie Walters), a recent divorcee that needs rent money to keep her large Edwardian home. It seems like an ideal arrangement for both of them, but she is curious about the woman who visits his room late at night. He explains that she is just a very close friend ...

Although Monica is older than Gerald, they are attracted to each other and eventually end up in bed together. After the bedding he is filled with some kind of guilt. He avoids her for the next three weeks because he doesn't know how to tell her that he is a crossdresser. She is distressed and convinced that, because of the incident, he will leave the boarding house.

When he finally comes to tell her "something important", she is prepared to hear that he is leaving, but is surprised when he explains that he is a crossdresser; he and Geraldine, the woman of the midnight visits, are the same person. She bursts out in laughter -- probably in relief that he is not leaving -- in surprise at his revelation.

Gerald, now disconsolate, returns to his room and starts to pack. Monica has second thoughts and goes to his room and asks to see Geraldine. Gerald complies and Monica witnesses the transformation from Gerald to Geraldine.

Following this, there are episodes in a restaurant that caters to crossdressers and some shopping sprees where Geraldine gains confidence in her ability to pass.

But, things are going too smoothly: Geraldine is stopped by the cops one night and his life comes apart. He has a tyrannical boss that has been pressuring Gerald to sell some properties to the Japanese that Gerald thinks are wrong, and when the boss hears about Geraldine, he fires Gerald.

Without revealing the rest of the story, suffice it to say that Geraldine eventually gets even with the ex-boss.

This is a very compassionate movie about crossdressing.

The scenes in the restaurant include fairly realistic portrayals of patrons who may pass or who cannot pass in a dark alley. We can relate to Gerald's hesitancy to reveal himself to Monica. We understand the fear he experiences about going out in public in the daytime. Also, there is the fear of meeting someone you know, and the biggest fear of all ... what happens if you are stopped by the cops.

Aside from the story I have some interesting impressions: Gerald has great eyelashes, even as a man. The clothes are great and there is the honest portrayal of the tendency of some crossdressers to over-dress. One of the patrons of the restaurant is sitting with his elbows on the table, a sure giveaway.

*Just Like A Woman* doesn't parody crossdressing. It pretty much shows what many of us have seen or experienced for ourselves. I hope it gets a lot more public exposure.

'ZINE REVIEWS! ... continued from previous page

listing "intimate resources" for people with disabilities and invites the gender community -- especially those who also have disabilities -- to make contact with her.

Write Linda at Phoenix Counsel Inc., One Springbank Dr., St. Catharines ON L2S 2K1, Canada if you're interested.



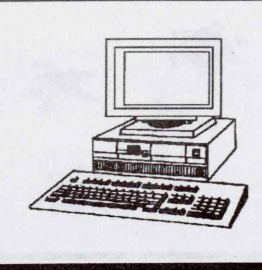
One of the 'zines we reviewed in issue #57, *Skyjack*, apparently ceased publication before we could get the word out about them; the complimentary copy of *Cross-Talk* we sent them was returned as undeliverable around the beginning of August. I'm sorry to see this one go; it had a lot of untapped potential, in my opinion.

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# THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY AND YOU

## MY LOCAL BBS

by Eileen Richards

In this article we will examine the local roads that lead to the information superhighway, some of which are on- and off-ramps as well. These are Bulletin Board Systems (BBS).

BBS got its name because the early ones had only one or two of the features that the modern ones now have. They could post messages, both private and public, and the public messages were the really popular part. Much like a bulletin board with 3x5" cards at your local supermarket, these messages were available so anyone could read them, they could be on (almost) any topic, and could be replied to. Even the replies could be replied to! In that way, discussions are held, and many times not just by two people.

One discussion area, called private e-mail, is considered "private" because its messages can be read by the author and designated recipient only. Everyone can use this area, but they don't see messages that they aren't a party to. Of course it's not absolutely private, because the system operator (sysop) can see any message on the system at anytime.

There are several different types of BBS: social, chat, dating, games, professional, sex, graphics, library, business, educational, network access, etc. Most offer more than one of these services and others have almost all of them. In this article we will concentrate on the type of BBS that has traditionally appealed to the gender community.

**Chat, Social or Dating** boards have dozens of lines where people can "talk" to each other interactively. Each person enters a chat area, then types a line and when the Enter key is pressed, the words display for everyone in that area to see.

The "sex" boards have "hot chat" areas and/or erotic games and/or explicit GIF (Graphics Interchange Format, pronounced "jiff") files -- pictures that users have sent in that have been converted to digital form. The boards that specialize in graphics have extensive libraries of GIF (and other format) files, some sexual in nature, but many not. Many boards have extensive libraries of programs that the users can copy to their own systems and use.

Some boards provide access to networks. That topic will be discussed at further length in a future installment of this series.

The difference between commercial service providers and

a local BBS are significant. Service providers are usually large commercial ventures, including CompuServe, Genie, Prodigy, and America OnLine. BBSs are, for the most part, smaller; many are run as hobbies of the sysop, not as a for-profit business. That means that the smaller systems are often free; medium sized ones are a mixture of the philanthropy of the sysop and subscription money; and larger ones have (hopefully) passed some magical make-break point where the subscription revenue exceeds expenses and pays for expansion.

The interaction with other users on the BBS, in various ways, is the primary purpose for the BBS. Interaction with other services, like online airline reservations, stock quotes or trading, and live access to other systems is commonly available from service providers, and not commonly available from BBSs. Financially, the major service providers generally charge a monthly base fee, additional hourly fees for connection, additional hourly fees for premium services, and additional specific fees for particular activities or services.

Here's an example using Prodigy's rates: The monthly base charge is \$8.95, which includes two hours of premium time (which on includes all the public messages written by other users) and ten letters of no more than six screens in length each. Additional letters are 25 cents each, and additional premium time is \$3.60 per hour. My girlfriend, before she realized what she was doing, and discovered BBSing, had run up over \$100.00 in additional charges for letters and premium time during her "Free Month" (Prodigy called it that because they waived the \$8.95 monthly fee). To be fair, Prodigy offers an offline mail reader/writer software -- which costs \$5.95 to get -- and letters written using that software cost only ten cents each.

By comparison a typical local BBS charges \$15.00 for a block of 30 hours for \$15.00. (In hourly access, there is no expiration or renewal date, but when your time runs out, you will be requested to purchase more time or buy a flat-rate subscription.) For this amount you generally have unrestricted access to all the BBS services, including the file libraries, electronic mail, chat areas, games, etc. A monthly subscription might cost \$5.00 to \$30.00 per month and range from an hour a day to 24 hour a day access. On some systems, the lower priced subscriptions will not include access to all features.

(There is one more cost variable: Your local phone company will charge you the regular rate per minute for

any data call you make with your modem, just as if you had talked to a friend that far away for as many minutes. For this reason, BBS sysops -- and commercial service providers -- try to offer as many local numbers as they can, so you can pick the least expensive one for you to call.)

Some BBSs have a few services that they charge extra for, per use. One I know can send a fax for you. Some will let you use their local numbers to reach another BBS that wouldn't be local for you, charging less than what the phone company would charge you. If you fall in love with a BBS that isn't local to you, ask about other ways to reach it that won't cost as much. I'd rather belong to two BBSs, and use one to reach the other -- say at the cost of \$20.00 per month -- than have to pay \$60.00 per month in phone charges to the phone company, wouldn't you?

When you first call (or "log on" to) a BBS, you will be asked for your **handle** -- this is the name you go by on the board. Depending on the board, the first time you call it, you may either be asked to either enter your desired handle or to enter "NEW" (this will usually require you to choose a password and complete one or more questionnaires).

If it is not the first time you have called, you will then be asked for your **password**. The importance of choosing a handle and password cannot be over-emphasized. Your handle is what people will know you as for the length of time you are on that system; you will not usually be allowed to change your handle once it has been chosen. You may go by different handles on different BBSs. This will allow you to interact with the same people differently; to "hide" from other users who might be bothering you; or to have both female and male accounts. Some Sysops don't allow handles and require you to use your real name; some require only that the name you use sound like a real name. Some systems let you change your handle, but they assign you an Identification number, which cannot be changed. If you are number 451 on that system, you can be "Zsa Zsa Gabor 451" at 7:00, "Ray Bradbury 451" at 8:00, and "Alice in Wonderland 451" at 9:00, if you so choose. Of course, your friends may recognize you as "451" no matter what name you give yourself for the moment.

Your password needs to be chosen with care. It needs to be both easy enough to remember **and** must not be too easy for others to guess. Your name, address, phone number, or other easily guessed word would not be appropriate. If you are on multiple boards, **do not** use the same password on all of them. Since the sysop has access to your password on that board, he could try to impersonate you on another board if he was unethical.

After you have completed signing on, some systems will give you immediate but limited access, and some will require that they **verify** you before you are given a free demonstration account. They want you to try out the system, for a while, and decide to subscribe, but first they want to make sure of a few things. If you say you are a

female, and the sysop or a staff member calls to verify you, they are expecting to find a female on the phone. Many boards also are open only to adult subscribers, and the verification process is a legal check to make sure that you are of age. Computer and Telephone law is still evolving, and where a graphic file of a nude is art in one person's eyes, it could be pornography in another's. So if they are checking to make sure you are of legal age, it's for their protection, not to invade your privacy. I have explained my feelings regarding my gender to sysops and been granted their blessings to use my *femme* name, show female gender, or both. Sysops can be quite understanding and accommodating, and I have not been censured or forced to append TV, TS, CD or some other designation to show gender disposition. That, in my book, makes the sysops I've been involved with more accepting of our community than the service providers who do require such labels. [Editor's Note: Shortly before press time, we received word that America OnLine has discontinued its "label" requirement as reported in Marla Baldwin's earlier installment in this series (Cross-Talk #53).]

**Menus** are lists of the choices available to you at the moment; your selection in a menu directs your session on the BBS. Often a menu will lead you to another menu. From the main menu, you can select the electronic mail menu. From the electronic mail menu, you can select reading or writing mail. The menus have letters or numbers or symbols that you will press to direct the way the session goes. On some boards, you should not press Enter after your selection; on others, it is required.

A typical chat menu may offer you Private Chat, Group

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Chat, Semiprivate Chat, Linked Chat, or specifically labeled chat areas (by topic, such as "hot chat" or "S&M chat"). Group Chat -- or **Teleconference** -- is an area where many callers can engage in the same discussions, or not, similar to being in the same large room. There could be one discussion; or a moderated game; or several discussions; or even one discussion with some off-topic questions, and a heckler (or two).

Semiprivate chat is a private area that you invite callers into. If you are the hostess, then you can invite and evict anyone you choose (except the sysop, of course), as often as you wish. On systems that don't offer hosted semiprivate chats, you can use a high-numbered chat area and only tell the callers you want to know, what area to meet you in. (The lower-numbered areas show on the "who is online" listing; the higher numbered ones generally don't show.) In these types of chat, the other callers only see what you typed after you press the Enter key. **Action phrases** (if available) can greatly enhance the fun in these chats, because by typing a word or two, an entire sentence will be displayed to the other callers. For instance "Hug Betsy" would display "Eileen is hugging you close" on Betsy's Screen, and "Eileen is hugging Betsy close" on everyone else's screens.

On the other hand, private chat is between two callers only, and each person sees each keystroke as it is typed. It is an etiquette convention in this type of chat to press Enter two or three times when you are done typing, to indicate to the other caller that it is their turn to type.

Linked chat is between callers on that BBS and other

BBSs (not necessarily local ones). Because of the costs involved, most sysops don't offer linked chat during all hours, but post when the link will be active. If you have friends in another city (or country) and a BBS local to them is part of the group that links up this could be a great way to keep in touch without having the long-distance bill to pay.

Hot chat isn't a technique of chatting, its a style of conversing. It is often meant to arouse and is usually sexually explicit. On boards that allow minors to call, it may not be allowed between minors, or between minors and adults. Etiquette (and system rules) require that if a private area is reserved for such chats, that it be used.

One last thing about chat, there are special symbols used in chat. Smileys are pictures made with typewriter characters, usually sideways. A colon, hyphen and right parenthesis, like this :-), makes a smiling face. At least, if you put your head on your left shoulder it does. wink grin sigh and the like indicate actions or emotions. A future article in the series will discuss these in depth.

When you write a letter to another caller on the same BBS, it is delivered to their **e-mail** (for "electronic-mail") box instantly, and they will be notified if they happen to be online. This is a standard feature common to all BBSs. Some systems allow you to send carbon copies, which are copies of the same letter to other callers. You may even be able to edit each carbon copy separately.

You can also send mail to users on other systems via what's called netmail. The mail is delivered one or more times per day to another system, and eventually to the system that you addressed it to, where it is then deposited in the recipient's mailbox. A typical netmail address is composed of the caller's handle and the system address for the system that their account is on. Emily Clarke discussed Internet addresses previously; they look different on different nets (for example, my Fidonet address is *Eileen[1:102/528]* and my Internet address is *eileen@xconn.com.*)

In addition to Internet and Fidonet, you may encounter TG-net, which is themed for transgendered issues, Relaynet (also known as RIME) and MajorNet. Networks will be discussed more extensively in another article in this series.

Another feature that is common to all BBSs are public message boards, or **forums**. These are the areas where you post public notices, or comment on what others have posted. This is how BBSs got the name "Bulletin Board Systems". Forums are arranged by topics, and etiquette calls for the conversations to stay on the posted topic! Forums are local; only readable by callers on the same system.

Netforums are the networked equivalent of forums. A message written in San Diego on the local BBS there will be transmitted to other BBSes and added to the forum of that topic when the netmail is passed. Then it is readable

on the other BBSs, and callers on those boards are able to comment on comments (or "postings") made by others without regard to the location of origin. A question asked in such a forum may be answered not only by callers from the same and other cities, but also by callers from other countries! Similar to this concept are private subscription-based memberships in groups of callers (across networked systems) called lists. Software at a designated system (the **list server**) coordinates the subscriber database and routes -- or re-posts -- subscribers' messages via netmail. Emily Clarke mentioned the two best known of these, cd-forum digest and TRANSGEN, last month; a future installment in this series will discuss all available netforums and lists in greater detail. [Editor's Note: Due to technical problems typesetting last month's installment, the subscription request addresses were improperly shown. cd-forum's request address is *cd-request@valis.biocad.com* and TRANSGEN's is *listserv@brownvm.brown.edu*. The instructions are correct.] Another standard feature common to all BBSs is **file libraries**. Files stored on the BBS' hard disks (or, in some cases, on CD-ROMs) can be selected by subscribers and sent to their computer (this is called **downloading**) or they can submit files to the sysop for inclusion in the library (**uploading**). The length of time it takes to do this depends on the file size and the speed of your modem connection. A Megabyte (1,000,000 bytes) takes about seventy minutes at 2400 baud. If a higher speed modem is available the files will transfer in dramatically less time.

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File libraries containing the graphics files I mentioned earlier (GIF files) are usually the most popular on a gender community-oriented BBS; most also have libraries with stories or information documents.

BBSs have a lot to offer. I even met my girlfriend -- thank you for helping me with this article, sweetie :) -- online! The low cost for membership, (remember, some are FREE!) and the number of services available give the best bang-for-the-buck that I have seen. We have quite a community, and there is a lot of support out there, and a lot of it is from who you meet in cyberspace.

[Next month: A survey of once-local BBSs who have expanded to become nationally known within the gender community.]

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

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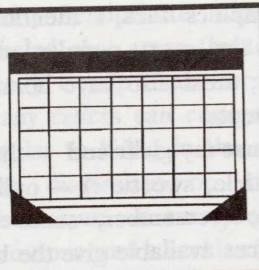
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# EVENTS CALENDAR



**September 3 & 4, 1994:** "GenDys '94", conference for professionals and others, University of Manchester, U.K. Details from BM GenTrust, London WC1N 3XX.

**September 15-18, 1994:** Fourth Annual "New Women's Conference", Guerneville CA. Information from Wendi Kaiser, P.O. Box 67, South Berwick ME 03908-0067, or by telephoning (207) 676-5870 (fax: 676-4433).

**September 22-25, 1994:** "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA. Details from Creative Design Services, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406 or by calling (610) 640-9449.

**September 29-October 2, 1994:** "Southern Comfort Conference", Atlanta GA. Information from P.O. Box 77591, Atlanta GA 30357, or by calling (404) 875-5749.

**October 8, 1994:** "Gender Symposium for Medical and Mental Health Professionals", Miami FL. Information from The Eden Society, P.O. Box 1692, Pompano Beach FL 33061-1692 or by calling (305) 784-9316.

**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.

**November 2-5, 1994:** "Fort Lauderdale Freedom", Sunrise FL, sponsored by Serenity and the Eden Society. Information via Internet ([jgould@gate.net](mailto:jgould@gate.net)), AOL ([JessicaAN](mailto:JessicaAN)), or by telephoning (305) 468-9732.

**November 10-13, 1994:** Tri-Ess "Holiday En Femme", New York City. Open only to Tri-Ess members, wives and partners, and other heterosexual crossdressers. Details from Lynda Frank, 330 W. 45th St. #3H, New York NY 10036; telephone (212) 765-3561.

**November 17-20, 1994:** "Fall Harvest '94", Cedar Rapids IA, sponsored by MAGGIE. Host organization: Iowa Artistry. Details from P.O. Box 75, Cedar Rapids 52406-0075 or by calling (319) 373-3031.

**February 21-26, 1995:** 7th Annual "Texas 'T' Party", San Antonio TX. Details from P.O. Box 17, Bulverde TX 78163 or by calling (210) 980-7788.

**March 13-19, 1995:** International Foundation for Gender Education "Coming Together-Working Together Convention", Atlanta GA. Details from IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland MA 01778.

**May 17-21, 1995:** "Esprit '95", Port Angeles WA, sponsored by Emerald City, NWGA, and Cornbury Society. Details from P.O. Box 873, Kirkland WA 98083-0873.

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



# 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 @  
 Connecticut Outreach Society, Hartford: (203) 657-4344  
 Cross Dressers International, NYC: (212) 570-7389  
 East Coast F2M Group, Cambridge: (413) 584-7616 #  
 Eulenspiegel Society, NYC: (212) 388-7022 %  
 Expressing Our Nature, Syracuse: (315) 475-5611  
 Gender Identity Program, NYC: (212) 969-0888 #  
 Gender Talk North, New Hampshire: (603) 924-8828  
 Girls' Night Out, NYC: (212) 794-1665 ext 202  
 Images, Hartford: (203) 779-9708  
 Imperial Queens of New York: (212) 580-9858  
 Int'l. Foundation for Gender Education: (617) 894-8340  
 Lambda Chi Lambda Chapter Tri-Ess, Utica: (607) 547-4118 @  
 Long Island Femme Expression: (516) 433-4866 @  
 Metropolitan Gender Network, NYC: (718) 461-9050  
 Outreach Institute, N. Portland: (207) 775-0858  
 Reflections, Boston: (617) 323-6082  
 Renaissance Greater Philadelphia Chapter: (610) 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, Arlington: (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 Exploration: (404) 875-9846 #  
 Black Rose, Arlington: (301) 369-7667 %  
 Carolina Trans-Sensual Alliance, Charlotte: (704) 551-8838  
 Eden Society, Pompano Beach: (305) 784-9316 #  
 Fantasia, Orlando: (407) 425-4527 #  
 GDA North Carolina: (704) 642-1914  
 Gender Information Network, Gainesville: (904) 332-8178  
 Grace & Lace, Mississippi: (601) 362-6335  
 Louisville Gender Society: (812) 944-5570  
 Montgomery Institute, Augusta: (404) 603-9426 #  
 Montgomery Institute, Gainesville: (904) 332-6638 #  
 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  
 Virginia's Secret, Richmond: (804) 222-6796

## MIDWEST & VICINITY:

Beta Gamma Chapter Tri-Ess, Minneapolis: (612) 870-8536 @  
 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., Minneapolis: (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, Kansas City: (816) 753-7816 #  
 Indiana Crossdressers Society, Indianapolis: (812) 876-5635  
 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 Sexuality 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) 980-7788  
 CrossDressers International, Tulsa: (918) 582-6643  
 Delta Omega Chapter Tri-Ess, Dallas: (817) 264-7103 @  
 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  
 Help Me ... Accept Me, Dallas: (214) 416-6632  
 ReCast, Dallas: (214) 994-9314 #  
 Second Image, Austin: (512) 515-5460  
 TS Peer Support, Houston: (713) 333-2278 #  
 Tau Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Houston: (713) 347-8747 @  
 Texas Ass'n. of Transsexuals, Houston: (713) 827-5913 #  
 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) 646-2802  
 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) 467-8317  
 Born Free, Riverside: (909) 278-0958  
 CHIC, Los Angeles: (818) 248-9075 @  
 Diablo Valley Girls, Concord: (510) 849-4112  
 Educational TV Channel, San Francisco: (510) 549-2665  
 FTM, Oakland: (510) 287-2646 #  
 Hawaii Transgendered Outreach, Honolulu: (808) 923-4270  
 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

*[For a list of hotlines for organizations outside North America, send a self-addressed envelope and an International Reply Coupon (IRC) to Cross-Talk, Dept. IH, P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365.]*

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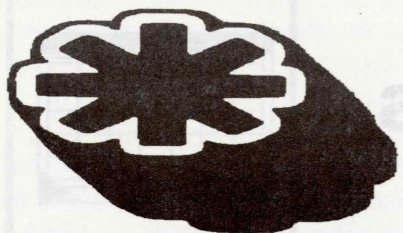
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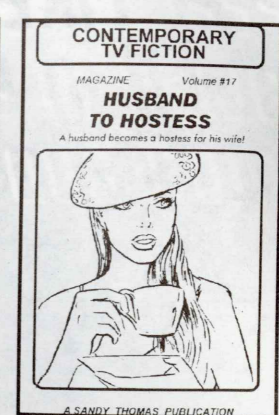
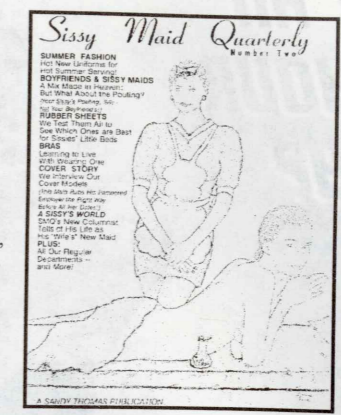
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