

# Renaissance News



Volume 6, No. 6

Vision - Integrity - Quality

June, 1992

## Renaissance swings into 6th year at gala anniversary party

by Angela Gardner

Our celebration of five years of longevity took place May 9 at the Holiday Inn at 18th and Market in downtown Philadelphia. More than 70 people descended on the hotel dressed in their party finery and found that Center City is open and hospitable to crossdressers.

Among the guests were contingents from the Washington, D.C. Delta Chi organization and New York's Long Island Feminine Expression (LIFE). They mixed and mingled with Renaissance members, cementing relationships between the three groups. Delta Chi issued a gracious invitation for Renaissance members to attend their June 6 gala dinner in our nation's capitol.

Also present were **Dr. Carol Cobb-Nettleton** and her spouse, along with Renaissance founding members **JoAnn Roberts**, **Alison Laing**, and this writer.

About two dozen Renaissance members, friends, and spouses attended a pre-dinner VIP reception with our guest of honor, **Dr. Richard Docter**, professor of psychology at California State University at Northridge, who had flown in from Los Angeles just for the affair. Later — after dinner — Docter provided an update on progress with his National Gender Research Project and his plans for future research in this important area. Then, he joined the founding members present for cutting of the anniversary cake; he received the first piece from Roberts.



PHOTO: IRENE MILLS

*Wishing for continued success for Renaissance, JoAnn Roberts, Dr. Richard Docter, Alison Laing, and Angela Gardner blow out the candles at the fifth anniversary party held last month. Roberts, Laing, and Gardner are among the founding Renaissance members. Docter, professor of psychology from California State University and a noted gender "big wig," was guest of honor at the affair.*

During the course of the evening, our official event photographer, **Irene Mills** of Hot Shots Glamour Photography, took beautifully posed photos of attendees as well as candid shots of the revelers. After dinner, **Rachel** and **Beth** led the dancing to the Motown sounds laid down by **John** and **Helene** of The Fun Department. Our bartender, **Eddie**, was heard to remark that the affair was much like an event he had worked a week before — a party for the Tower Club whose female members must be 5' 10" or taller.

The hotel staff was courteous, the food was great, and the company was excellent, even if a little mysterious. Who was **Whitney Brown's** distinguished and charming escort in a tuxedo, sporting ear-

rings and a full beard?

Merriment was the order of the evening and no one wanted to quit. After the party, some of the Renaissance girls joined the LIFE ladies at the **Trocadero** night club in Chinatown and partied until the wee hours. Other guests followed **Michelle Lynn** to the **Holiday Inn** bar, found it closed, and so they took over another lounge on Market Street.

In all, the whole evening was a lot of fun; too much fun to detail in this short article. Find someone who was there and ask them for the juicy tidbits.

And start planning now to attend our 10th anniversary party. See you in '97!

## Announcements...

### Background Papers...

are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-*Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing*, 2-*Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing*, 3-*PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others*, 4-*The Matter of Children*, 5-*An Annotated Bibliography*, 6-*Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View*, 7-*Understanding Transsexualism*, and 8-*AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics*.

### Pen Pal Project

If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please inform Maryann Kirkland or write to the main office, c/o Dept. PP.

### Prisoner Project

A gift of only \$8 gives a transgendered inmate 12 issues of the *Renaissance News*. Please help provide this needed support to our sisters in prison.

## Our chapters...

### Greater Philadelphia

Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Meetings start at 8:00 p.m. year round. For information, call (215) 630-1437, or write Renaissance PHL, Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. Michelle Lynn, chapter leader.

### Lower Susquehanna Valley

Meets the first Saturday of the month at Cameron Cut Rate, Cameron and Market Streets, Harrisburg. Call (717) 780-1LSV for latest information, or write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Brenda Davidson, chapter leader.

### South Jersey

Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc., 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782, or write Renaissance SJ, c/o Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Kara Foreward, chapter leader.

## Our affiliates...

Groups wishing to become a Renaissance affiliate must pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlimited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-Director of Outreach, Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406.

Our affiliated organizations are:

• **Monmouth/Ocean Group**, Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701

• **AEGIS**, Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033 (404) 939-0244

## Events to note...

### June

**6th South Jersey Chapter meeting: group rap on relationships led by Frances Bilker**

**6th Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter meeting in York: video presentation *What Sex Am I?***

**20th Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting: AIDS awareness — Emily Kahn**

### July

**4th Scheduled date for South Jersey Chapter meeting**

**18th Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting: crossdressing and religion — William Stayton, D.D.**

**No Susquehanna Valley Chapter meeting this month.**

### August

**1st South Jersey Chapter meeting**

**1st Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter meeting in York**

**15th Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting: vendors' night**

## Renaissance News

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## Report from Turkey

# *Kutu beybi! Madi paporon!*

by Phaedra Kelly

⇒ *This is the first part of Phaedra Kelly's initial report of her visit to the transgendered community in Turkey. In it, she explains the sad everyday life of many transvestites and transsexuals in that country.*

The title for this article is the Turkish and Lebanese slang terms for corrupt policemen in Turkey who take money from prostitutes, beat them up, unlawfully arrest them, or even murder them. The prostitutes in question are *travestie*, transvestites or as we identify people whose bodies that have been half-way changed, she-males. Their life of illegal vice is forced upon them by the government through corrupt law enforcement officials and the extremist right-wing fundamentalist Moslem majority.

In Turkey, as throughout most of the Moslem world, perversions which Western society frowns upon have an ancient history. Pedophilia there is a part of the apprentice system. Children are put under the charge of an older man who "breaks" them in sexually. Private homosexuality and transgender behavior is common, and the majority of married Turkish men engage in some homosexual acts, but do not consider themselves gay or bisexual. No matter how well known these private practices are, one must never go public in any way.

Influenced by their cousins around the world to become more open and accepted, Turkish gay and transgendered people are rejecting the blatant hypocrisy of the ancient Turkish system and are trying to live their lives with more freedom. On the face of it, this should be relatively easy because homosexuality is not illegal in Turkey. But, the gay community complains, if they go public with their lifestyle in even the slightest way, they are in

fact obliged to live their lives as *travestie*, and ultimately be forced to become transsexuals. This has resulted in a lot of confusion and some suicides, but it has also brought an alliance between gays and true transgendered people.

Among the gays forced to become transvestites, there are those who are truly by nature transgendered. But by being forced into a life of vice, they are denied the healthy self-expression and beneficial personal discovery we see in the Western transgendered community.

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Those I interviewed  
have been shot,  
beaten ... with whips,  
iron rods, rubber hoses,  
robbed, and generally  
abused. I saw none  
without some scar...

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In Turkey, post-operative transsexuals are able to have their papers changed and even obtain women's pink identity cards so they may obtain a job or even marry a man. But unlike transsexuals and more circumspect gays, those forced to be *travestie* are not allowed to work; they cannot enter a legitimate trade, nor can they get a license to work as prostitutes as can women. Thus thrown into a nether world as a "vogueer proletariat," they are obliged to prostitute illegally in order to be able to live at all.

*Travestie* have organized themselves into groups or "houses" of up to four or five. They live in the vice districts, plying their trade as best they can. They have hardly any time to take any civil action against their plight except necessary security precautions against raids. Some work

on the highways of Istanbul, outside Takism Square, but most operate from tiny flats. They have a phone network to monitor police radios and tiny dogs, which are not only surrogate babies for them, but are also trained as police detectors. If a customer comes to the door, they bark; if it is a paporon, they "no bark."

I lived with such a group through three different raids in one night. One moment there was jollity and a warm family atmosphere. I found that despite their need to work as prostitutes, their hearts are not entirely in the game, and there is little or no urgency for them to take in clients. The house is kept socially easy going. Then, there was a scramble. A *travestie* flew from the window chanting "Beybi! Beybi! Beybi!" A police unit had been seen in the street.

Double iron doors were locked upstairs and down. Earlier I had filmed them, showing the holes and dents of sledgehammers from previous raids. The lights, television, and fire went out, three curtains on every window were pulled against bricks and bullets, and we lay on the floor talking in hushed whispers for over three quarters of a lonely, icy cold winter's night.

When Turkey's armed police raid, they come in bus loads — up to 300 for one raid — and swarm all over the area looking up at windows. Local Moslem families come out to point out where *travestie* live. Any customer or visitor trapped within must hide with the *travestie* until the raid is over. I documented these raids on film, audiotape, and in my logbook as they happened.

The first raid of the evening was intended for drug dealers down the road who had been using the cover of a *travestie* house without their

(continued on page 13)

## In women as well as men

# Breast cancer linked to DNA mutation

By some counts, as many as 25 percent of breast cancers are caused by an inherited DNA mutation. While the presence of this mutation in males is normally only of concern for their daughters, it may be of great significance to male-to-female transsexuals who may develop breast cancer at the same rate as genetic females. A simple blood test to show if the mutation is present may be on the market within two years.

Irish researchers Fred Given and Dennis R. Headon of the National Breast Cancer Research Institute of Galway last month announced that they had found that 25 percent of the breast cancer tissue they studied contained altered DNA. Follow-up research showed the altered DNA was also present in the patients' blood. Using this information, they developed a blood test that is nearly 100 percent effective in detecting

the presence of this mutation.

Statistical evidence has long suggested that breast cancer may be inherited, but this is the first time the hereditary link has been identified.

They subsequently discovered the mutation was also present in men who could pass it along to their daughters or who could develop breast cancer themselves. According to the National Cancer Institute, the growth of breast cancer cells is fueled by estrogen.

Given and Headon said that knowing the genetic mutation is present could help people and their physicians head off the disease.

In a concurrent but unrelated development, the National Cancer Institute will shortly begin a five-year trial of the drug tamoxifen to see if it prevents breast cancer in women thought to be at risk for the disease because of age, family his-

tory of breast cancer, or other risk factors.

Meanwhile, until a way is found to prevent breast cancer, women who have mastectomies still will be able to receive silicone gel breast implants. However, the appliances will be virtually impossible to obtain for breast augmentation.

After temporarily banning the implants early this year, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner David Kessler recently announced that the implants could be used for breast reconstruction as long as the women receiving them participated in a study on the long-term safety of silicone gel. But, Kessler said, implants for increasing breast size would be all but impossible to obtain.

The FDA ruling does not apply to breast implants filled with salt water or experimental implants filled with organic fluids like peanut oil.

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# Ex-showgirl hopes to turn the pain of once being a man into a comedy career

Being fired from your job because you are transsexual can be a devastating experience. But Jahna Steele has found it to be yet another experience she can laugh about. In fact, she hopes a lot of people will laugh along with her because she wants to be the first transsexual comedienne.

Steele, 33, had been performing topless in the "Crazy Girls Dance Revue" at the Riviera Hotel in Las

my secret. Yet, a lot of famous men told me I was one beautiful woman."

One man found her so beautiful that he married her in 1985. Unfortunately, they were divorced five years later. Now she is dating a 23-year old bodybuilder named Tony Fabrizio.

Steele, who now measures 36-22-35, played Little League and was an altar boy named John in San Anto

"The only reason I became an altar boy was because the cassock I got to wear looked like a dress. It meant I could finally wear a dress. I must have been a real puzzle for the priests. They'd find me in the back of the church, twirling around and singing "The Sound of Music." I was always pretending I was Julie Andrews."

"I never dressed up in my mother's clothes, but my sister had a Barbie doll, and I lived to play with it. Since becoming a woman, I've had three 'boob jobs.' I kept getting them bigger and bigger. Until I looked like Barbie I just couldn't stop."

After she graduated from high school, Steele moved to California. Half a dozen years later, in 1983, she had her sexual reassignment surgery.

"I felt like Cinderella when she finally puts on the glass slipper," she said.

She still hopes to marry her Prince Charming and adopt a baby girl.

"I want a little girl to primp, pamper, and fuss over. I want to give her the childhood I never had."

## Quote/unquote...

"The hardest part about being a man was wanting to be a woman.",

—Former Las Vegas showgirl Jahna Steele

Vegas. She had the gig for five years, and last year was named "Sexiest Show Girl on the Las Vegas Strip." But her career screeched to a halt recently when she told an interviewer for the television show *A Current Affair* that she used to be a boy.

"No one looking at me ever suspected that I was born a man," Steele said. "Only a few close friends knew

nio, Tex. Like most transsexuals, she describes her childhood as painful. But she has turned that pain to her advantage.

"They say all humor comes from pain," she said. "Well, I've had plenty of that; my childhood was a nightmare. Deep down I felt like a girl. I acted like a girl. But I was trapped in this boy's body. It was horrible."

Then comes a joke...

## Long Island blonds have more fun in Philadelphia

Two members of the contingent from the Long Island Feminine Expression (LIFE) share a table with Whitney Brown (on the left) at the Renaissance fifth anniversary party held at the Holiday Inn in Center City Philadelphia last month. More than 70 people attended the affair, including several members of the Delta Chi organization in Washington, D.C. Afterwards, the Long Island girls enjoyed the city's night life.

PHOTO: IRENE MILLS



THE **NEWSQUEEN**<sup>TM</sup>  
*Paula Jordan Sinclair*

If we've heard one transvestite say it, we've heard a hundred: "Why can women wear men's clothes and be called stylish, but men who wear women's clothes are called perverted?" The lady who made crossdressing fashionable for women died last month in Paris. Marlene Dietrich was 90.

Her film career lasted more than 50 years, but it was her first three major movies that established her as a crossdressing icon. In "The Blue Angel" (1930) she portrayed a cabaret singer. Her golden blond hair, mesh stockings, and high heels were appropriately feminine. But when she put on that top hat and sat astride a chair on stage, she made such a strong transgendered statement that that image is forever linked with erotic crossdressing. The same year she appeared in "Morocco," again as a cabaret singer and again with a top hat, but now she wore the full man's costume of white tie, waistcoat, and tails. She donned the same outfit for "Blonde Venus" in 1932.

Despite these and other roles in men's clothes, Dietrich was seldom "in drag" trying to pass herself off as merely a man. This prompted critic Kenneth Tynan to observe: "Most women, according to an old joke, have gender but no sex. With Dietrich, the opposite is very close to the truth. She has sex but no particular gender... Dietrich's masculinity appeals to women, and her sexuality to men."



Linda Hendershott tried to pull a very poor imitation of Dietrich last month in an Indiana courtroom when she posed as her husband, Leroy, to face the rap for writing bad checks. Bailiff Terri Stephan spotted the disguise right away despite Linda's slicked back hair, work uniform, and boots. It seems that Linda had been in court before on bad paper charges.

So, was this a case of wifely devo-

tion, an attempt by the Linda to take the fall for her man? No, it seems that she had signed his name to the latest batch of rubber checks and was trying to keep the news from him.

Authorities said the charges would be refiled in Linda's name.



Hollywood almost lost another legend last month. During the height of the Los Angeles riots, a crowd of people looted Frederick's of Hollywood, and (if you'll pardon the expression) stripped the place bare in about 15 minutes. The inventory can be replaced, but Frederick's officials have offered a \$1,000 reward for the return of Madonna's sequin-trimmed, purple bustier with gold tassels that she wore in the music video "Open Your Heart." The item was stolen from Frederick's lingerie museum.

Other museum relics were returned, via a Roman Catholic priest. The looter, identified only as Jim B., a 24-year-old art student, had an attack of remorse the next day and surrendered Ava Gardner's bloomers and Katey Sagal's push-up bra to the Rev. Bob Fambrini who returned them to Frederick's.

Jim said that he had hoped to get Madonna's bustier, but it was already gone by the time he entered the store on Hollywood Boulevard. He settled for the bloomers and bra. "But if I was really smart I could have made off with Milton Berle's drag costume," he said. "I was really wanting Zsa Zsa's bra. That would have been hot."



The Frederick's museum still has many interesting treasures, but it *doesn't* have the world's oldest set of falsies. Those were just discovered in Germany's Lake Constance.

Archeologists digging in shallow waters along the lake's shore unearthed four pairs of human breast models made from clay. They estimate them to be 6,000 years old.

They said that the breast forms were made to be attached to a wall of a building, and they hailed them as the oldest wall decorations found in central Europe. Yeah, sure.



In another case of expert opinions flying in the face of common sense, a woman in Hastings, Minn. is suing school officials for \$250,000 because they caused her 9-year-old son to want to dress up in her clothes.

Rochelle Rutherford claims that when the boy was in a pre-school program he was forced to use the girls' rest room and that when the kids played dress up in adult clothes, only women's clothes were available. Those early childhood experiences, she said, have forced the boy into therapy for gender identity and crossdressing issues.

Rutherford's lawyer noted that nearly five years later the boy "still has a preference for female clothing. He wants to wear not only clothing, but jewelry, makeup, and nail polish. He does it furtively." The lawyer said that the school district erred by not making men's clothes available for dress up activities.

While not commenting on the transgender issues, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights has agreed that the Rutherford boy was discriminated against by being made to use the girls' bathroom at the preschool.



Meanwhile, other kids are taking to crossdressing (actually Krossdressing) in a big way. Their parents aren't blaming teachers, but an adolescent rap duo called Kris Kross. Instead of wearing clothes of the other gender, the rappers and their fans wear their clothes backwards.



There is a new trend in Thailand; the men are becoming women.

According to a report in our favorite supermarket tabloid, "experts" say that because of the high

THE **NEWSQUEEN**<sup>TM</sup> *Paula Jordan Sinclair*

incomes for prostitutes, more and more men in their early 20s are having sex change operations to increase their earning power. By one estimate, there will be no men in that age group left in the country by the year 2010



Thailand may have a burgeoning supply of transsexuals, but New York has a "bottomless supply of drag queens," according to a more respected publication, *Women's Wear Daily*. The crossdressers were out in droves for an April party hosted by designer Jean Paul Gaultier to mark the first anniversary of the Henri Bendel department store on Fifth Avenue. "As usual, they were basking in their sartorial and cosmetic splendor," *WWD* said of the TVs.



Thanks to efforts by a group called Concerned Christians, the U.S. Virgin Islands has a growing number of drag fans.

After the fundamentalist group announced its opposition to the Miss Gay Virgin Islands pageant held on Saint Croix, more than 1,000 people paid good money to see the queens compete. Last year they tried to block the pageant with equal success.



Spectators in a Vista, Calif., courtroom will be treated to a show of a different sort when Tye Matthews, 30, appears in drag to answer purse snatching charges. His attorney doesn't think wearing a dress to court is a good idea because the victims all said that the person who grabbed their purses looked like a man dressed as a woman.

"Mr. Matthews is a transvestite, and he has told me that he wants to wear a dress during the trial," attorney Donald Beury said at a preliminary hearing. Judge David Moon granted the request, saying, "I guess people should have the right to wear what they want to wear."

After the hearing, Beury said that the case largely hinges on whether witnesses can positively identify Matthews as the purse snatcher and that his client has a better chance of an acquittal if he dresses as a man. But, Beury said, "I don't think he is going to change his mind."



If Matthews is convicted and sent to jail, maybe the warden in California will be easier on him than the warden of the Canadian federal prison in Warkworth, Ont. was with the case of Wayne Stovka, 29.

Stovka had requested permission to wear women's clothes behind bars. The warden denied the request but agreed that Stovka could wear makeup and nail polish.



One last crime item: Police in Milwaukee have arrested Derrick Hendricks, 37, for luring teenage boys to his apartment for oral sex and drugs. Hendricks dressed in a filmy negligee and told the boys he was a California porno queen named Melanie Samuels.

The revelation that Samuels was actually a man was nothing compared to what else police learned. He had been arrested 28 times in California on prostitution and disorderly conduct charges, has 24 aliases, and has AIDS.

Hendricks' California probation report starts out describing him as a "he" and ends up describing him as a "she." It noted that he "lived the life of a woman since age 16."

Authorities in Milwaukee were unsure how many teenage boys had sexual contact with Hendricks, who was being held on charges of sexually assaulting minors and enticing children.



Police in Philomath, Ore. had a puzzle on their hands after an accident on U.S. Highway 20 in February. The victim, wearing high heels, a pink blouse, a black skirt, and makeup and nail polish, apparently

intentionally stepped in front of a truck loaded with wood chips. Later, police identified the victim as Melvin Marks, Jr., 25, of Boise, Idaho.

Police say that Marks had two beers and a bowl of chili at the Woodsman Tavern and then walked out to the highway. The driver of the truck said Marks was standing in the middle of the road. The driver tried to swerve to avoid hitting him, but a deep ditch prevented him from moving off the road. At the last minute, Marks took two steps into the path of the truck. His body was thrown about 100 feet.

Police suspect suicide, but the incident is under investigation.



The drag communities in Philadelphia and San Francisco lost two important members recently.

Edward O'Donnell, known for decades in the local community as the female impersonator Patty Page, died of a massive heart attack in April. He was 63.

For many years, Patty operated his own drag club, Miss P's, at 18th and Lombard in Center City. He sold the business in 1978 and then joined Wayne Prentiss and the Fabulous Fakes. He also performed with Jerry Paris. He last performed in 1987.

A former Empress of the Imperial Court of San Francisco also died in April, nearly six weeks after he was attacked by two men wielding baseball bats. Cameron "Tina" Tanner was the victim of what San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan called a "gay bashing."

According to witnesses, the two had stalked Tanner, and then, without any interaction or apparent motive, one of them slammed him on the side of the head with a bat. The two men fled, and Tanner never regained consciousness. Police homicide detectives are investigating.

*Please send clippings about crossdressing to Miss Sinclair at the Renaissance office. Don't forget to note the name and date of the publication*

The **FORUM** For Ideas

# Neo-Fascism in the gender community

by JoAnn Roberts

It's bad enough we have to put up with ignorance, stupidity, and abuse from "straight" society, but do we really need it from our own sisters?

Most of us are too young to remember Nazi Germany, so I did a little research. National Socialism, as it was called then, is characterized by several attitudes:

- Authoritarian
- A moral/cultural superiority
- Anti-intellectual
- Anti-liberal
- Anti-democratic

Nazism was a form of fascism, a philosophy that advocates strong centralized power and permits no opposition or criticism.

Does any of this begin to sound familiar? If so, that's because there's a neo-fascism festering in the com-

munity. There are people out there who have formed so-called support groups with a strong centralized control center that does not permit any criticism of its activities.

I call these people the "Gender Nazis" and they're easily spotted. Here's how to tell if you've encountered a Gender Nazi:

- Authoritarian — I'm right. You're wrong. If you disagree with me, you are my sworn enemy.
- Moral/cultural superiority — I'm better than you are. Because you're my enemy, you're slime. Because you're slime, I can say anything I want about you.
- Anti-intellectual — Don't confuse me with facts, my mind is made up. I know I'm right. I never listen to other people's opinions.
- Anti-liberal — There's no room

in my philosophy for yours because I'm right and you're wrong, etc.

• Anti-democratic — I know what's best for you. Do it my way or suffer my wrath.

There are many kinds of people that fit these characteristics, but Gender Nazis have some special traits, such as:

- Exclusivity — Their philosophy is *exclusive* rather than *inclusive*. Granted there are certain kinds of exclusivity that are not fascist, but these exclusions go farther than is required or necessary. These "special rules" are for your "protection." Membership in their group is a privilege, not a right.
- Rationalization — They use twisted logic to justify their actions. They have the single solution that works for everyone's problems.

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# preaches hate, threatens our diversity

• Crusading — Gender Nazis always seem to be on a crusade to protect their members from (pick one or more): homosexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, liberals, therapists, the DSM, or the American Psychiatric Association.

• Fanatical — At the merest hint of criticism, Gender Nazis go into attack and destroy mode. No aspect of your personal life is sacred.

• Manipulation — They use fear, guilt, and shame to manipulate people. They want to control instead of empower.

• Hypocritical — Gender Nazis will say anything to make their point, even if it contradicts something they said five minutes ago. Fortunately, they rarely remember what they said, so it's easy to catch them in the lie.

Watch out for Gender Nazis. Like David Duke, their message sounds rational and reasonable at first. But once you get under the "surface," you can see the real message of hate for anybody and anything that is different than they are.

There is no room in this community for "hate" messages, no matter

how subtle. We should not and cannot tolerate them. We must openly embrace the diversity of our sisters and come together in unity, not uniformity. In unity there is strength and the Goddess knows we're going to need all the strength we can muster to survive the '90s.

## Quote/unquote...

**"Transvestites, because you get a little of both."**

—Actor Christian Slater, named by US magazine as one of "the 10 Sexiest Bachelors," in response to the question "Do you think men or women make better friends and why?"

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The *For Ideas*  
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# Be careful or gender boxes

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by Susan Edwards

Almost every speaking engagement that I have been on, I get a question that more or less asks what is the difference in "feeling" between transsexual people and crossdressers. They are in a sense asking, "How do you 'know' — that is know with a certainty — that you want to do this?"

It is a question that I have heard asked by many of my friends and acquaintances in the gender community, and not a few of the clients that I have counseled have come to therapy asking that same question of themselves. I heard it asked at the very first support group meeting I attended. It would seem that for many, the release of the "feminine" part of their identity through crossdressing begins to lead to a logic something like, "If it is good, and more is better, than a lot more is better still; ergo, I must be a transsexual."

A friend of mine (I'll use the name Anne) came out a couple of years ago. Being out, dressed in public, was a thrill, and having the opportunities of both time and money, she spent a good deal of her time perfecting her feminine persona. The elation that she was feeling was not only about the clothes, but also about freedom: the freedom to feel beyond the bounds of the narrow range of emotions that bind the masculine role in this culture.

Anne was learning that she had a great capacity for the more tender, nurturing, "feminine" feelings and that expressing them felt good. It opened for her a whole new world of caring, not only about others, but also about herself. She had felt that taking the time to do nice things for oneself wasn't manly, but, rather, that as a male she was bound to a role of stoic endurance. She found

what real joy there is in the simple pleasures of taking care of one's own needs — even to simple things like a concern for appearance or making the time for a relaxing bath. Her own need to like herself was finally getting met. But it was only getting met while in the feminine role. So, because it felt good, both physically and psychically, Anne wanted to stay in the role and persona that she had allowed and created for herself, wherein she was permitted to express these "feminine" feelings.

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## Permission to feel soft or vulnerable or nurturing ... is not granted by the clothes we wear

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It was then that she began to talk about being transsexual and to wonder about whether she could go through with transition and all the anxieties associated with such a fateful decision. Talking to her one day, she was going on about how "Bob" could never do this and "Bob" was such a jerk because he never could do that. I had to ask her who the hell she was talking about. "Well, me, of course," she answered.

Well, if that was so, I asked, why didn't she just say "me" instead of "Bob?" It was she who didn't do those things. Wasn't she trying to disown and evade responsibility for her own actions by ascribing them to this other person, "Bob?"

If, as we profess, we are facing our individual gender issues openly and are feeling better about ourselves, then it would seem to me that we would want to feel that way all of the time, regardless of how we're dressed or what gender role we happen to be fulfilling at any

particular moment.

As our culture has defined different modes of dress for the sexes, the culturally defined gender roles can also be seen as limiting the allowed modes of personal expression. Our socialization teaches us that "big boys don't cry" and that for males to show empathy and sensitivity towards the feelings of others is somehow to be "sissy." Men should be hard and cool and unfeeling, the strong, silent John Wayne type of guy. But having those feelings and those emotions is not a matter of gender; rather, they are natural and normal human expressions.

For many of us though, the reaction to having the need to express those facets of our personalities that are culturally defined as feminine is made all right only by assuming the culturally appropriate role (i.e., to dress in women's clothes). We then put ourselves into a psychic closet. Rather than have anyone suspect that we would have such "unnatural" feelings, we disallow them. We hide in a role that is hyper-masculine. It is only in the privacy of the closet — where we dress in the outward symbols appropriate to those repressed feelings — that we allow ourselves to open up to the emotions that society labels feminine.

Like Anne, many of us have divided our emotional life into gender roles. We jump from one gender box to another. When dressed, there is the constant worry of passing — not just in terms of looks, but of behavior as well. On one hand, we rail about the limitations of the masculine role, and on the other, we gladly take on restrictions of a role that would have made Queen Victoria seem a fellow traveler of Gloria Steinem. In looking at my own issues, I began to understand that for me it was necessary to be a whole

The For Ideas  
**FORUM**

# can become gender traps

person emotionally. Defining myself was not about sex, or gender per se; it was about integrating all parts of my life into someone I liked. I am not a different person emotionally if I am wearing hose and heels or if I am wearing jeans and tennis shoes.

There is in the gender community a popular rationale for crossdressing behavior — that by so indulging, men are “allowed” to feel those emotions that are outside the cultural and social boundaries of the male role. Perhaps. But I think it offers more a getaway, a means and a mode of becoming a fully feeling person unrestricted by the sociocultural definitions of what is or is not gender-appropriate. It is one stage toward finding a whole that is greater than the sum of the individual parts. Emotion has no gender. Feeling has no sex. Permission to feel soft or vulnerable or nurturing, or to feel much less strong, aggressive, or protecting, is not granted by the clothes we wear, but

by the quality of person we are. In this respect, the issues are not those of gender, but rather of “simply Human-being,” to quote e.e. cummings.

So, to answer the question of how you know if you are or are not transsexual, you must look for the answer beyond the trappings and restrictions of both gender roles — to see yourself as being the best person you can be.

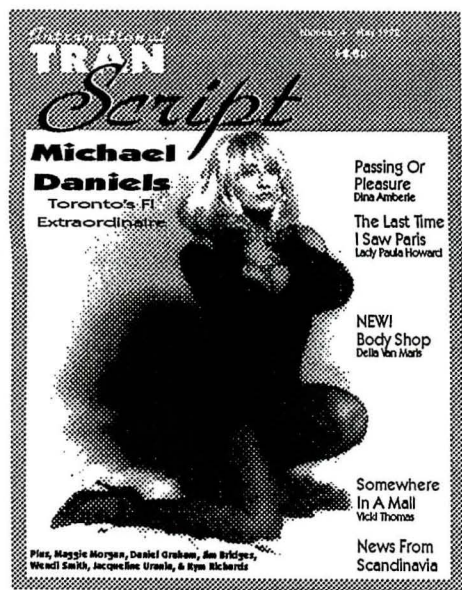
For Anne, she found that when “Bob” started to put away his macho attitude and started to loosen up and to acknowledge and allow the full range of his emotional pallet, he found himself beyond the self-imposed limitations of how he had perceived the way men and women should act. Anne/Bob was no longer leading separate emotional lives defined by culturally dictated gender roles. It gave him/her the space to decide and really know how he/she felt — not as a man or as a woman, but as a person. Bob de-

cidated that on the whole he was more comfortable with his genitals the way they were. The need to define him/her self as being either one gender or another had lost the urgency it had once held. Bob is much happier now, and so is Anne.

If we do this right, our transgendered experience can be a great opportunity to grow into the people whom we wish to be. In the play *Hidden, A Gender*, playwright Kate Bornstein has written, “Gender, it can be either a battleground or a playground.” Decide what you are after you have thought about who you are.

⇒ Ms. Edwards is a doctoral candidate at the University of California at San Diego and is a counselor in private practice in that city. Her area of study is in the differentiation of gender-based behavior.

Reprinted from *Chrysalis Quarterly* (vol. 1, no. 3), published by the American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS).



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# DeVeareaux claims self-defense in slaying

Shawn DeVeareaux, the well-known Philadelphia female impersonator now in Holmesburg prison for murder, is claiming self-defense in the bludgeoning death of his roommate, Frank Griffin, in January.

"No one knows what I was going through," DeVeareaux said. "He could have shot me."

Although the two shared an apartment on the 1200 block of Walnut Street in Center City, DeVeareaux said they were not lovers. But, he said Griffin, 42, was obsessed "with believing I moved in to be more than a roommate." While he considered Griffin his friend, the situation between the two had gotten tense.

"There were nights when I came home and he would lock me out of the apartment, and I'd have to sleep in the hallway in drag," he said.

In a statement to police after he turned himself in, DeVeareaux said that the two quarreled over money owed to Griffin. When the older man threatened to evict DeVeareaux from the apartment unless he paid the debt, he said he became very angry and attacked Griffin from behind, hitting him several times on the head with a hammer. After killing Griffin, he disposed of the clothes he was wearing and the murder weapon.

DeVeareaux expressed anger at the way he has been portrayed in the local media, especially the gay media.

"The media wanted a story about a 'drag queen' who murdered a man," he said. "Shame, there's a lot more to the story, but I guess the part you wanted, you got."

As an example, he cited an interview with a teammate on the gay bowling league who said DeVeareaux raised eyebrows when he often bowled at an alley in South Philadelphia in drag "complete with fake nails."

"Did that same person speak on how I dressed as a man for two months prior to my arrest?" DeVeareaux asked. "Of course not, there's no interest in a young man dressing like one."

In prison since January on \$200,000 bond, DeVeareaux is adapting to life at Holmesburg.

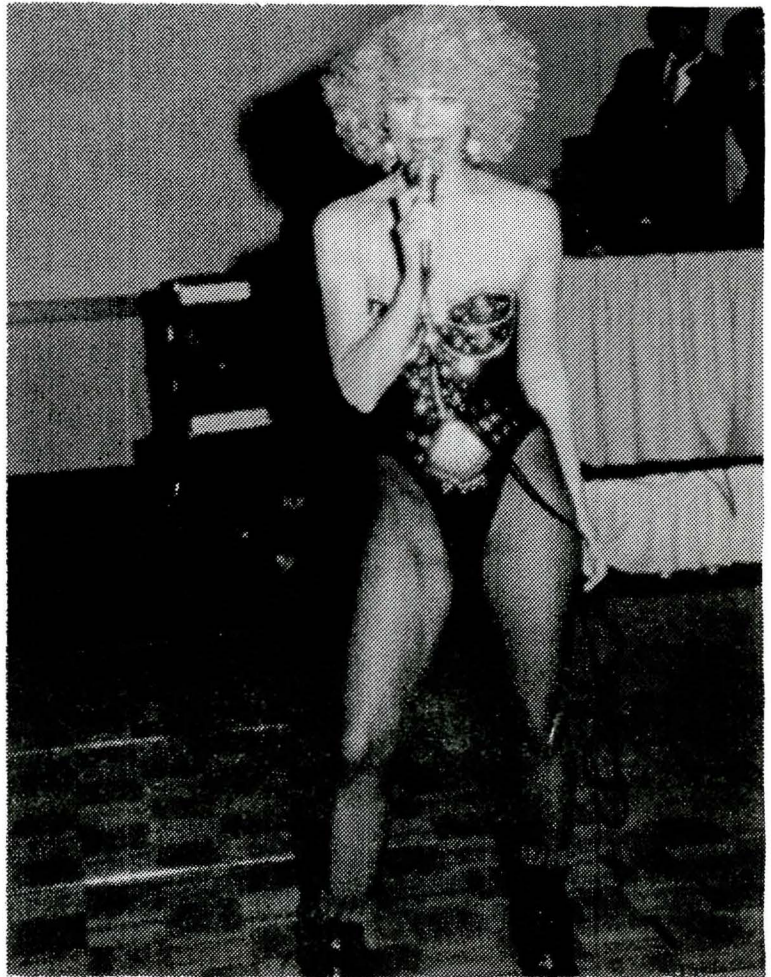


PHOTO: IRENE MILLS

Helene does her impersonation of Madonna at the Renaissance fifth anniversary party last month. More than 70 envious guests enjoyed her performance.

"I spent the first two weeks here, in my cell, crying my eyes out. Finally, the other inmates approached me and said, 'You have to come out of there and act like it isn't bothering you.' So I did, and I'm doing all right."

Being gay and in prison isn't much of a problem. "The other inmates don't mess with me because I'm not a 'jail faggot,'" he said.

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# Kutu beybi! Madi paporon!

(continued from page 3)

hostesses' knowledge. The next came within ten minutes after the street cleared from the first. The heavily armed anti-terrorist squad was hunting a Kurdish man who was hiding in our flat, sitting not more than two feet from me as I wrote and taped in the dark. The final raid of the evening was a "general operation," 300 police for 20 *travestie*. I filmed and interviewed the victims the next day.

Those I interviewed have been

shot; beaten in the streets with whips, iron rods, rubber hoses; robbed, and generally abused. I saw none without some scar, usually the distinctive crescent wound of a bullet. This I expected on elderly transsexuals and *travestie*, whose scar tissue is deep and often overlaid. But on the sumptuously beautiful young flesh of Seda, 28 years old, I found between her shoulder blades a hole a half inch wide where a policeman 7 years ago had shot her in the back.

Ordinarily, *travestie* victims are taken to a special "sexual control" hospital where the abuse continues in an effort to "change their minds" prior to release. Once arrested, they are marked by society, so from then on, usually suffering from illness and diseases because of the experience, they are forced even more into vice. Attempts to get many of them to organize have been hampered by the fatalistic surrender to their situation. Yet those not strung out on drink or drugs are on the verge of organizing for their own protection.

The *travestie* population is varied. I met a former schoolteacher — now a *travestie* — who taught English and math. I saw gifted singers, dancers, and other persons of many talents. I encountered their ability to truly love and to be devoted to one person like anyone else. The way this little group looked after me, they could — with outside help — become tour guides or hoteliers. There is no limit to the number of options for their employ is respectable jobs: actresses, models, guides, hoteliers, nurses for the Red Cross or the Red Crescent, or just about the only trustworthy nannies or schoolteachers in Turkey. Were they guiding Europeans, accommodating Europeans, serving as nannies to European families abroad, or entertaining in their own night clubs, restaurants, or hotels, they could afford to live, be human, be respectable, move away from their lives in bondage, and live without the commendation of local Moslem families, businesses and authorities.

⇒ Next, Phaedra will report on how Turkish politics impact on transgendered people, and on one person's efforts to gain relief. Her complete report on her recent visit to Turkey will be contained in a book, also titled Kutu Beybi/Madi Paporon! Her visit to Turkey was partially funded by a gift from Renaissance.



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EAST STROUDSBURG, PA. — With business partners like this, who needs competitors?...

Most people know that there are two Pocono weekends hosted by two different people. Well, add a third competitor to the bunch, but you may have to delete one of the previous producers in the process.

You see, **Rainbow Mountain Resort** advertised a "special cross-dressers weekend" from April 30 to May 3. Those were the same dates as **Muriel Olive's Pocono Fantasy Weekend**, but that's not surprising since Olive holds her event at Rainbow Mountain. So what gives? Was this a collaborative event?

According to my source who spoke with the marketing director at Rainbow Mountain, the resort felt it could cash in on Olive's crossdresser weekend on its own. But they're advertising a rate that is about \$100 cheaper than Olive is advertising.

I think this is unconscionable and unethical. The resort is cutting the legs out from under one of its own customers in the name of pure greed, and Olive, who has long been a supporter of our community, gets the King's Elevator.

I don't think we, as a community, should support or condone this kind of behavior. I urge you all to avoid responding to the Rainbow Mountain advertising, and for heaven's sake, don't mail it with your newsletter like **Tiffany Club of New England** did. Dumb!

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HARTFORD, CONN. — The best laid plans...

I'm really sorry to see that *Twenty*, the newsletter of **The XX Club** has gone to a bi-monthly publication schedule.

According to a letter by **Brenda P.**, the current editor, she just doesn't have enough time to produce a monthly newsletter and maintain the quality or page count.

I think that Brenda has the right

idea, though. Keeping up the quality is probably more important than getting a couple of sheets of paper in the mail every month. Some of the stories are just priceless. Like:

A transsexual in Seattle was going through a pretty nasty divorce and when (s)he used the ladies room during a recess, the wife's lawyer motioned the court to arrest the transsexual. The transsexual was called to the bench.

"Did you use the ladies room?" asked the judge.

"Yes, your honor."

"See! I TOLD you," screamed the wife interrupting her attorney. "He's a MAN, throw him in JAIL!"

"How shall we resolve this?" the judge pondered. "What does your driver's license say?"

"Female" the transsexual responded.

The judge examined the evidence closely. "Not guilty," he proclaimed, relieved and smiling, then glared down at the soon-to-be-ex-wife and her lawyer, "Case dismissed."

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SANDNES, NORWAY — Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery...

**Jenny Sand** was so impressed with **Fantasia Fair** in 1990 that she came all the way back from Norway for the 1991 Fair. Now she'd like to see a Fair-like event produced in Europe.

**EuroFantasia** is the name that Sand has given to the event planned for sometime in the Spring of 1993. So far, she has cooperation from **Claudia R.** in Germany, **Martine Rose** from the U.K., and I've offered to throw in with her from this side of the big pond. The location will very likely be a small resort town in Denmark, about an hour or so from Copenhagen. Stay tuned for details.

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SAN ANTONIO, TEX. — This could get very interesting...

Apparently, not all is sugar and spice with the membership of the

**Bolton & Park Society**. Word is that some members are defecting to a new organization called the **Blue Bonnet Coalition**, that bills itself as a group for "ALL transgendered individuals."

Anyone interested should write to P.O. Box 333145, San Antonio, TX 78265-3145 or call (512) 656-4163 between 7 and 11 p.m. CDT Wednesdays.

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EVERYWHERE — There are more horse's asses than there are horses...

The "debate" between **Virginia Prince** and **Tere Frederickson** over Prince's new term "bigendered" is showing up almost in every newsletter I pick up.

While in Houston last month, two pundits concocted yet another new term to throw into the fray: ambigendered. The best analogy they came up with would be an ambicycle, which is a unicycle that has two wheels, but you can only ride on one wheel at any given time.

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LOS ANGELES — A road apple by any other name...

**Susan Howard** of **CHIC** is concerned about the "one upmanship" displayed by the Prince and Frederickson "debate." Howard says, "Most folks... don't much care about what they're called as long as it's not late for a sale."

She adds, "What a lot of self-righteous road apples! In all these community publications that I read, reference is constantly made to 'feminine sensitivity' and how we mince by the terrible onus of 'testosterone poisoning.' What nonsense. It's quite masculine to seek autonomy and to be *right*. Whereas, it is more feminine to seek congruence and to discover *right*. It doesn't take a lot of reading to see what a truly masculine group we are no matter how we seek to present ourselves."

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SEATTLE — No news is good news?...

Howard isn't the only one who mentioned the Prince/Frederickson debate this month.

**Mary Gibbons** of **Emerald City** edits a column called *Newsletter Digest*. In her May column she says, "If I saw one more article about this or that transsexual being arrested or assaulted, I was going to die of depression. If I saw one more reprint of Virginia Prince's article on the merits of renaming ourselves 'bigenderists' or rebuttals to the same, I felt terminal boredom overtaking me."

So, taking Gibbons' wail about the lack of good "news" to heart, the editors of *EC News* have created some of their own.

One **Randi Leigh Dennis**, in an article riddled with misspellings and malapropisms, claims to be in a "nasty verbal debate" with me over racial bias in our community's publications, mine and others.

I don't know who she's debatin' verbally, but it ain't me babe. I've never spoken to Dennis and I resent the unsubstantiated charges.

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SOMEWHERE U.S.A. — I lost the reference...

I seem to remember that one of the newsletters (maybe even this one) mentioned a sequel to the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* was in production. Well, that's not technically correct because the official sequel to *RHPS*, *Shock Treatment*, has been on video store shelves for quite some time.

The movie was released in the early '80s and was a bomb. **Richard O'Brien** who penned the original also wrote this one. But, more money, more production, and more Hollywood could not match the magic inherent in *RHPS*.

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LONDON — Speaking of movies and crossdressing...

According to a report in the *Beaumont Bulletin* for Easter 1992, the book *Geraldine: For The Love Of A Transvestite* has been made into the movie *Just Like A Woman* and stars **Julie Walters** and **Adrian Pasdar** (whomever they are).

Filming concluded last December. Several local transvestites were used as extras in the film. According to sources, the *Daily Telegraph* called it the first mainstream film with a transvestite hero/heroine. (*Tootsie* fans should not take offense since Hoffman's character was not a transvestite.)

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SAN FRANCISCO — Sister Sam Wants You...

I was inducted recently, drafted actually, without knowing it, but I'm not arguing with the call.

I've been drafted into the **Queer Army** by the **Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence**. I received my "draft" card from **Sister Juanita la Bufadora de Insane Francisco** Doncha' just love their names!

Anyway, the sisters are raising their army to fight a "queer holy war against bigots, fascists, and right-winged fundamentalists of AmeriKKKa." Unlike the discriminatory federal army, Sister Sam's Queer Army welcomes gay, lesbian, bi, straight, and transgender recruits. As nonviolent military personnel, QA recruits will be called upon to protest homophobic churches, distribute condoms, and stage theatrical maneuvers.

Contact the sisters at (415) 957-3638 or write 584 Castro St., Suite 392, San Francisco, CA 94114.

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ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND—Once they were lost, but now they've been found...

I was really pleased to run into **Anne Forester** from the **Scottish TV/TS Group** while I was in Houston. This group was one of the first to exchange newsletters with us

from overseas. But some time ago the newsletters stopped arriving, and we thought the group had folded.

Not so, says Forester. In fact there are three groups active in Scotland now, and it was only the *Tartan Skirt* that had lapsed.

If you'd like to exchange newsletters with these ladies, write to ADF Editorial Services, Tullochvenus House, Lumphanan, Aberdeenshire AB31-4RN, Scotland, UK.

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CINCINNATI — Pay attention: never, ever sleep in your makeup...

It would help immensely if you knew **Linda Buten** personally, but the story is funny anyway.

Linda returned home from the **Cross-Port** meeting very late and ran upstairs, quickly washed her face and jumped into bed.

A couple hours later, half-dead for lack of sleep, Linda (now "he") met with his employees and sent them off on their jobs. Each man had a funny look on his face but no one said anything.

Later, Linda stopped at a supply house for some materials and one of the countermen asked, "Did you get your truck fixed?" Linda replied, "Yeah, it's all fixed, but how'd you know I was working on the truck?"

"Easy, while you were working on your truck, you musta rubbed your eyes; they're all black."

Darting into the restroom, Linda discovered Uncle Fester looking back at him in the mirror. They were black rings of mascara around both eyes. Linda also learned that waterproof mascara doesn't wash off with cold water and paper towels. On the other hand, she was "caught" red-handed, and no one really saw the truth. Lucky girl!

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NOTA BENE - The opinions expressed here are mine and mine alone. If you have a comment, positive or negative, write me at P.O. Box 61263, KofP, PA 19406-1263.

# DANGEROUS CURVES AHEAD.

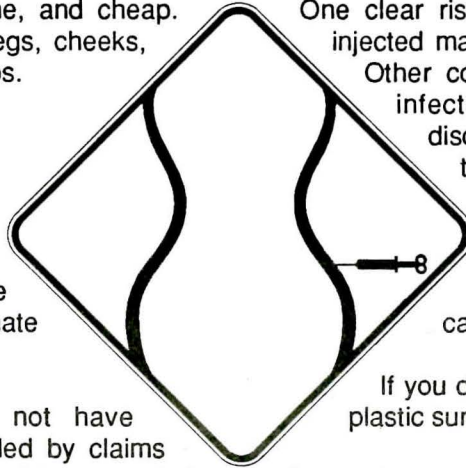
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