

Cross-Port InnerView

P.O. Box 12701, Cincinnati, OH 45212

The next meeting is June 21 at 8:00pm

A New View

by Elaine

Last month there were 37 ladies at the **CROSS-PORT** meeting. There were eight new members Lisa, John, Erica, Audry, Gail, Ken and S.O. Allic, and Jamie and S.O. Sue. A special welcome to Sandy from Crystal Club and Bobbi, Gail's therapist. We thank everyone for attending and we hope the new people had a good time.

We also have an announcement: **Christopher's has closed for an indeterminate time period.** We will try and keep you posted as things progress. We have an alternate site available at the Golden Lion on Ludlow. A map is enclosed at the back of this newsletter. One will also be posted at Christopher's on the Thursday meeting night, for those people who do not receive the newsletter.

A Dream Come True

Just a few words to say hello to one and all and that I will miss seeing all you lovely ladies this month. Your sister is finally going

to fulfill one of her dreams. For over a year now, I have been making plans with great anticipations of taking a trip to Europe, Austria, and my parents homeland of Germany. This month it will finally become a reality.

Some of the cities I will be visiting are known the world over for their beauty and culture. Salsburg is the birthplace of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, while Vienna is probably the town in which he became most renowned for he's music. Needless to say, I am thrilled beyond words to be able to go there as Mozart is one of my most favorite composers.

On the other hand, Innsbruck is a sight of past Olympic games. It is also famous for its Alpine scenery. Then on to Munich and the Bavarian mountains. A point of note here is Berchtesgaden, the sight of Hitler's "Eagle's Nest" during the second world war.

These are just a few of the places I will visit on this ten day tour. I hope to take many photos and record the rest on my newly purchased camcorder. Upon my return I hope to share these photos and recording with all you lovely

ladies.

My only regret is I will miss my first meeting since becoming a member of Cross-port in May of 1991. Anyway, have a good time at the June meeting and I will see you at the July get together.

Love Joyce

Hi

I thought that you might want to know my feelings on my first meeting at **Cross-Port**, dressed. I know that I'll do better with each outing.

The fear is great, I can't be late. Tonight I am going, To be just one. I'll be me, till half past three. Then I'll lose what's really me.

I paint my lips, and wipe the sweat.

I know that now, I'll take that step. I close the door, and walk not far. I made it to, that cross-port bar.

I walk inside, I cry inside, now I know, there will be no (sue-a-side). I meet the girls, with all there curls. Now I see a different world. **Thank you all, you Cross-Port girls.**

Denise

Deciding to Begin Therapy: When can a Therapist be Helpful?

by Georgia Green, LICSW

People often consider psychotherapy, then questions arise that get in the way of a decision. Does one have to be "crazy" to seek out a therapist? Does one need to be at a point where all is lost and one is dangling off the nearest bridge? And how does one find a therapist? The purpose of my writing this article is to address some of the questions which keep people ambivalent about beginning therapy, often to their own detriment.

Various issues bring one to psychotherapy. For some, it is feelings of depression, isolation, anger, or sadness. For others, symptoms such as compulsive behaviors, addictions to drugs or alcohol, phobias, anxiety attacks, or suicide attempts signal the need for help. Circumstances such as losses, job layoffs, or divorce, may bring about emotional changes which become difficult to manage. Any and all of these, and many more, are legitimate reasons for anyone to seek the assistance of a therapist.

For cross dressers the reasons for going into therapy are no different than those noted above. It is also important to note that being a cross dresser is not necessarily a reason to be in therapy. On the other hand, some cross dressers have maintained this precious secret for years and have

never talked about it with anyone. The sense of isolation and sometimes even shame that accompanies such secrets can have a devastating effect on one's self-esteem, to say nothing of one's family relationships, friendships, work relationships, and love relationships. And what about this person's ability to focus on and to develop to his or her fullest potential? What about the person whose cross dressing becomes the focus of personal or interpersonal conflict? These are additional good reasons for cross dressers to seek the assistance of a therapist.

When Is One Ready?

To draw on a physical metaphor: when the pain is great enough, a person will begin to limp, and it is time to seek help. In other words, when the sadness occurs too often, when the loss is too great, or when the confusion gets in the way of work or love, it is time to include someone else on the journey. Don't wait until life is a crisis. If you have waited long enough to be in crisis, get some help immediately. A good rule of thumb is: Never worry alone. You do not need to live in a vacuum.

Finding a Therapist

Finding a therapist is the next task, and not a simple one at that. Remember, YOU ARE THE CONSUMER. In other words, since you pay the tab, you should be working with someone whom you trust, and with whom you have confidence, both in skills and in personality.

While the Yellow Pages is a legitimate source of names, keep in

mind that therapy is a very personal thing and there may be more personal referral sources. If you know someone who is happy with his/her therapist, this is a good place to start. BUT, do not expect to share this therapist. Close friends who attempt to share a therapist sometimes find that feelings of competition, worries about confidentiality, and loyalty issues intrude either upon the therapy relationship or upon the friendship. Keep the boundaries clear, and ask for a referral through the friend's therapist. Good therapists associate with other good therapists and can give good referrals.

Some therapists who have expertise in working with the cross gender community advertise in publications such as the Tapestry and in local publications of cross dressing organizations. Some advertise in other publications that come out of the gay and lesbian communities. State chapters of professional organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers have referral services which list clinicians by particular areas of expertise. One can request the names of clinicians with expertise with the cross gender community. Gender clinics, and physicians who provide medical services, i.e. endocrinologists, internists, may also be resources for good mental health consultation and ongoing therapy.

Cost

Private therapists, that is clinicians not associated with a public clinic, tend to be more costly than their public sector counterparts. Cost also depends

on their level of professional training. For example, psychiatrists (who are also trained as medical doctors and can prescribe medications) generally have the highest fees. Psychologists, who sometimes do behavioral therapy and who can provide psychological testing, tend to have slightly lower fees than do psychiatrists. Social workers whose fees are comparable or slightly lower than psychologists, often are skilled in family and couples work as well as in the individual therapy. The above are generalizations, and while all the professionals above provide individual therapy, their skill specialties differ greatly from person to person. You must inquire.

Health Insurance

If you have health insurance it should provide an annual benefit for "outpatient mental health" services. Check to find out how much per year your policy provides. Your insurance card may have a phone number on it which you can call for this information. You can also check in your health coverage booklet or with your employee benefits department at work. Some plans have a deductible which an amount each year you must pay before the insurance company begins to provide payment. This is usually between \$150.00 and \$250.00, but varies from plan to plan. Some plans pay 100% of each session up to a certain amount per year; others pay a percentage of each session up to a certain amount, and require the insured (you) to pay a small co-payment.

Most large insurance

companies such as Blue Cross and Blue Shield and Aetna allow you to choose your own therapist, and will pay the benefit as described above as long as the therapist is licensed to qualify as a service provider. HMO's (Health Maintenance Organizations) require you to see one of their designated mental health clinicians. If you should choose a therapist other than a designated therapist, they will not pay. HMO's usually provide only very short term psychotherapy. Those seeking ongoing therapy, that is to exceed eight to ten sessions, may want to request an outside (the HMO) referral which again the HMO will not pay for. EAP's (Employee Assistance Programs) also require you to see a therapist with whom they have a contract. However, if you require a therapist with special expertise--i.e., one with experience with cross gender issues, they may approve a therapist of your choosing, as long as the therapist is licensed in your state.

It is important to address the issue of licensing. The good news is that licensing ensures that basic requirements of education and competence have been met by the therapist. This is quality assurance in action. Insurance companies will only reimburse licensed therapists. The bad news is that licensing does not always guarantee that the therapist is good, or is a good match for you.

In some states anyone can hang out a shingle and call him/herself a therapist. This means that an unlicensed person could be a charlatan, and your insurance will not provide payment to boot. On a more optimistic note, there are

some unlicensed therapists who because of their experience in particular issues are fine therapists. It is up to you, the consumer, to assess the trade off.

Now, just to complicate matters, I should mention that there are some people who have insurance coverage who choose not to use it. That is, they pay full fee to the therapist without involving their insurance company. Some of these people are: 1) those who have HMO's and choose a therapist outside the plan; 2) those who want to work with a therapist who is unlicensed or is otherwise not approved as a provider by his/her insurance company; 3) those who choose therapists, who while licensed will not want to avoid the required reimbursement; and 4) those who want to avoid the required (by insurance companies) diagnosis which they fear may effect their future eligibility for life insurance or disability insurance. The last two scenarios address both consumers and therapists who feel that one's emotional life should remain separate from one's insurance company.

The Match

A very important part of choosing a therapist is interviewing him/her. A good therapist will not mind giving you information about his/her training and credentials and about his/her methods of therapy. If the therapist is not a medical doctor you may want to know who s/he uses as a medical backup should you require medical consultation, i.e. usually medication. Beyond this, you should assess your own comfort level with the therapist. Having a

clinician with the proper training and experience is half the battle; finding one that is also a good match for you is the other half. You need not make a decision to continue therapy with this person at the end of the first session. One session does not obligate you. You should feel free to think about it, to come back for another session, and/or to interview one or two more therapists before making a commitment. Most people do not want to spend too much time and money in this process, however, the point is that nobody should work with a therapist who is not a good match.

Questions you might ask yourself:

- 1) Do I like this person?
- 2) Does s/he seem interested in me and in my issues?
- 3) Is s/he knowledgeable about people, and do I like this therapist's ideas about therapy?
- 4) Is s/he clear about the therapy contract? In other words, can s/he answer payment, fees, and insurance questions? Is it clear to me how long sessions last, how often we would meet, and when payment is due?
- 5) Can I be open with this person?
- 6) Do I have confidence that this person can be helpful? Do I trust him/her?

What to Expect Out of Therapy

As described briefly above,

the first one or two sessions should be considered by you to be opportunities to assess the match between yourself and the prospective therapist. The therapist will want to make clear the treatment contract, and begin to gather information about you and your reasons for choosing to be in therapy.

Confidentiality will be one issue to be discussed. The therapist should explain this to you. Generally, this means that your therapist cannot share information about you to other persons. There are two extreme circumstances in which your therapist would disregard your confidentiality. One is if your therapist felt you were in danger of harming yourself; the other is if s/he felt you were in danger of harming someone else.

Another situation in which the specifics of confidentiality would be important to discuss would be the event of his/her anticipated testimony in a divorce or custody matter. Laws differ slightly in this regard depending on the credentials of the therapist.

Initial sessions will be opportunities for you to tell the therapist about yourself, and about the issues which bring you to therapy. The therapist will ask you about your family, your growing up years, and about the people who are in your life at present. This helps in understanding the context in which you developed into the person you are. The therapist will want to know what you expect out of therapy and how you would like him/her to be helpful. You will also have the opportunity to ask some questions of the therapist and

to form impressions of the therapist's style. It is an opportunity to express reservations you may have about therapy, whether based on fears, past experiences, or on the experience of friends.

You must be an active participant in a therapy relationship. I'm reminded of someone who once said to me that he was looking for a therapist, "to give me therapy." My thought was that he would be looking for a long time. One can't be the passive recipient of a commodity called "therapy"; one must actively engage in a therapy relationship.

A therapy relationship is also akin to a laboratory in which relationships can be examined. The therapy relationship is a very powerful tool with which to learn about what you bring, both in positive and in negative ways to relationships. It is not uncommon for one to experience in the therapy relationship the kinds of dynamics that one experiences with family, friends and partners. These are all opportunities to experiment with change.

One question-often asked is, "How long will therapy take?" The answer is, "As long as it takes." To expand on what is truly not meant to be a snide response, the latter depends on many factors. Consider how long the issues that brought you to therapy took to develop. Change cannot be measured in the number of hours logged in therapy, but in the amount of work you are willing to do.

It is important to mention

ending therapy, or what we in the field call, "termination." Endings are important, as much so as first impressions and beginnings. This is one reason why funeral rituals and traditions exist, that is, to help those who must go on. Leaving therapy should be negotiated between you and your therapist.

A word in closing: while the preceding may sound like a lot of work, it is. However, being in therapy, can be the best choice one can make when other life circumstances and the pain involved tell you that a change is needed. Therapy should feel like someone is in your corner; it can be fun, supportive, and inordinately helpful in ways that stay with you long after the relationship has ended. You're worth it.

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LICSW
Needham, Massachusetts
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Linda's Corner

I must be getting old. It seems like yesterday, that Sharon called me up and told me there was a new group of crossdressers trying to form a support organization. Sharon at that time was one of my few friends in Cincinnati that knew about Linda. We had been in another support group that had been meeting in the Middletown area that was now defunct.

Cincinnati was pretty much like everywhere else. I knew we had at least 5 crossdressers in our area,

because I had met them or corresponded with them in one form or another, but we had no formal group. I didn't even know if Cincinnati had gay bars where crossdressers were allowed to frequent. My closest friend, Valerie, and I use to once a month drive down to Louisville to a place called the "Downtowner". It was the place to go, if you wanted to see female impersonators. It was always a good time, with exception of the drive back about 4am in the morning. We also had a few friends in Indiana, so some times we traveled to Indianapolis to just meet, talk, and see FI shows.

It was July in 1985 that I got that call from Sharon. She said that last month, a girl named Heather had a few crossdressers over her house, and was trying to put together a group, and would I like to come. She knew that I had been involved with three other support groups in the Greater Cincinnati area over the past four years. I was excited about the prospect, but not confident anything solid would develop.

We met on July 18, 1985, at Heather's house. Seven "Girls" attended. Heather told us that last month was the first time she had dressed in front of another crossdresser.

A few days later, she had left the house for the first time as a girl to visit Sharon. Everyone listened with open ears as she told us how she slipped out of the house in the cover of darkness. How frightened yet excited she was, as she made her way to Sharon's house. How they talked for hours and hours. And even her thoughts on the road

home. "About 1:45am I headed for home, very happy, but also a little sad. Happy because I had just experienced a long time fantasy. Sad because I knew it was a fantasy no more. Now I dream of going to a football game as Heather. That's one fantasy I can count on for a long, long, long time."

That was seven long years ago. I still don't know if Heather ever got to that football game, but they tell me that she now goes out in the daylight. 'Way to go girl.

Most of you who read this know Heather. She's still hanging around, just like me. We occasionally still hear from some of those first timers, but most have gone their own way. I'd love to tell you stories about all the other girls, but I can only write so much before I bore you.

By the third meeting, it was decided that Crossport should join a national crossdressing organization. We went with the Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) from Oakland California, because they had the same beliefs and policies that Crossport had. Unfortunately, Georgia, the leader was burnt out by July of 1986, and GGA folded.

Sharon Hart was the leader of a GGA chapter in Chicago. To pick up where Georgia left off, she started the National Gender Alliance (NGA). We signed up as a chapter. We felt a national organization was important, but we felt Tri-Ess was just too close minded.

Now about this same time, me

and Heather had taken a trip to Chicago to see Sharon Hart, and to attend something called the "Spring Fling". While there we met Merissa from the Tiffany Club from Boston. We attended a number of meetings about an organization she was putting together call the International Foundation for Gender Education. I was put on the steering committee representing Crossport. My first report to our members, told of IFGE'S plans to have a national convention in Chicago the following spring. We both attended that next year, and of course I've stayed very active up to the present.

Back at home, our 1st year anniversary of Crossport also brought big changes. The attendance at our meetings was hitting between 15 and 20, and Heather's home couldn't handle the crowd. (Nor could the neighborhood.) We were moving the meeting to a new location called the **Hangout**. For those who don't realize it, the **Hangout** became **Christopher's**.

Here we are starting into our eighth year. Now the meetings are drawing close to 50 people. Also, here we are again faced with the possibility of having to move the meeting place. Hundreds of faces have come and gone. Many members of Crossport have never been to a meeting. Some may have come only once for just a few minutes. I know we have helped many people start to feel good about themselves. They have started to accept and enjoy life for what it is.

Hopefully Crossport will still be around for a long time to come. I

know it won't end from a lack of Crossdressers.

Make-Up Past It's Prime

I saw a segment about "Make-up Past It's Prime" on the June 26, 1991 Home Show. It gave some tips about the length of time that make-up is OK to use and what symptoms to look for when it is getting old. The length of time that some of these items is as short as 3 months so many of you will probably wish to use the tip they gave of sealing it up and storing it in the refrigerator to prolong it's safe usage time.

PAST PRIME MAKE-UP

FOUNDATION -- 2 years

Symptoms (liquid formulation only) -- It begins to separate into layers. To Prolong Usage -- Seal up and store in refrigerator at the turn of the seasons (for those of you whose skin color changes from sun exposure).

CREME PRODUCTS -- 2 years
(Lipstick, Creme Foundation, Creme Blush, Creme Eyeshadow)

Symptoms -- surface oil "sweating"

MASCARA -- 3 months

Symptoms -- clumping and change of smell

LIP PENCILS / EYELINER

PENCILS -- 6-8 months

Symptoms -- Chalkiness on the tip.

To Prolong Usage -- Sharpen, Sharpen, Sharpen.

To keep track of when to possibly replace the above items it was recommended to put the dates of purchase, opening and expiration on small stick-on labels and affix them to the bottles, etc. Remember "keep your powder dry" and **REFRIGERATED!!!**

Publication Notice
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InnerView is a monthly publication of Cross-Port for its members and friends. Subscription dues are \$18.00 per year payable in January of each year. It is our goal to support the TV, TS and Gay communities and in return we need your support.

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Cross-Port is a not-for-profit support group which meets solely for the support of cross-dressers, trans-sexuals and their family and friends.

Directions to Golden Lions Lounge

For those traveling North or south on I 75, take exit #3 Hopple street to first light and turn left. Take left at next light onto Central Parkway. After two lights, about One mile take right onto Ludlow Ave and travel north one and a half miles, two lights, Golden Lions * on left.

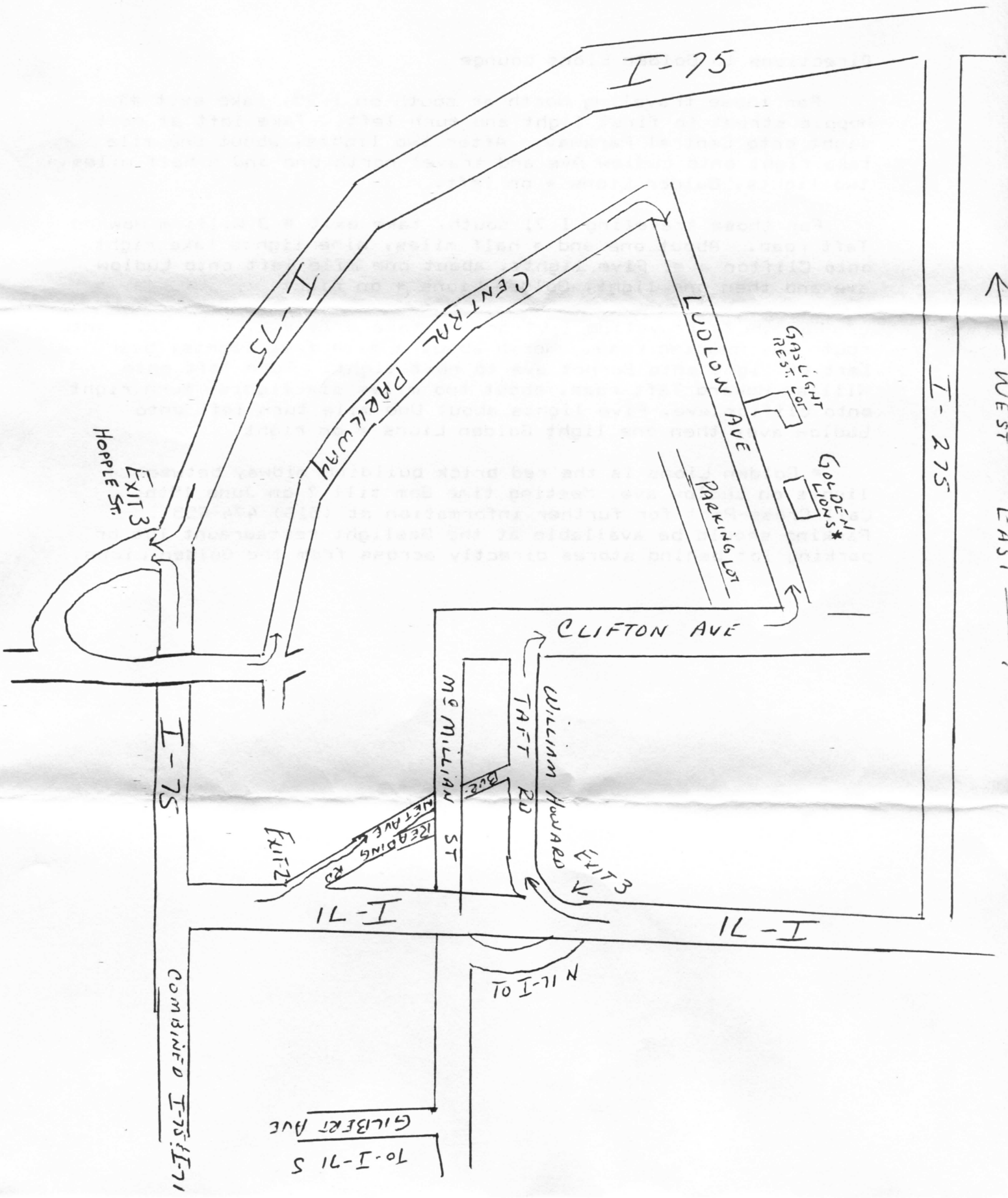
For those traveling I 71 south, take exit # 3 William Howard Taft road. About one and a half miles, nine lights take right onto Clifton ave. Five lights, about one mile left onto Ludlow ave and then one light, Golden Lions * on right.

For those traveling I 71 north, take exit # 2, bear left onto route 42, Reading road. North about a mile four lights, bear left at light onto Burnet ave to next light. Turn left onto William Howard Taft road, about two miles six lights, turn right onto clifton ave. Five lights about One mile turn left onto Ludlow ave, then one light Golden Lions * on right.

* Golden Lions is the red brick building midway between lights on Ludlow ave. Meeting time 8pm till ? on June 18th. Call Cross-Port for further information at (513) 474-9557. Parking should be available at the Gaslight restauraunt lot or parking lot behind stores directly across from the Golden Lions.

← SOUTH

NORTH →



← WEST EAST →

I-275

I-75

I-75

CENTRAL PARKWAY

LUOLON AVE

GAS LIGHT REST. LOT

GOLDEN LIONS*

Parking Lot

CLIFTON AVE

EXIT 3
HOPPLE ST.

ME MILLIAN ST

WILLIAM HOWARD

TART RD

EXIT 3

I-71

I-71

I-75

COMBINED I-75 & I-71

TO I-101

TO I-71 S
GILBERT AVE