THE INGERSOLL MESSAGE

INGERSOLL GENDER CENTER — SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

FEBRUARY, 1996 || VOL. ONE || NO. 12 || PRICE: $1.00/EA. || $15.00/YR SUBSCRIPTION

AN OPEN LETTER TO INGERSOLL

By Mary E.

Dear Ingersoll,

I am sure that you will not remember me, but my name is Mary Ellen O'Connor and I live in San Antonio, Texas. In June of this past year, I contacted the Ingersoll Center because of a magazine article that I had found (circa 1989) in the Library computer that talked about what good work your center does. As I knew of no support groups in my area, and in desperate need of an understanding friend, I talked on the phone with you on a number of occasions and you were kind enough to send me a lot of information and communicate with me (by snail mail). Your kind understanding and generous spirit has led to the following changes in my life:

In July 1995, I attended my first ever support group meeting with the Boulton and Park Society of San Antonio. They are the ones who sponsor the Texas 'T' party and is run by Linda and Cynthia Phillips. It was my first time ever out in public "congruent" (a term I have since learned). Although scared out of my wits, I ended up having a truly wonderful time and have met dozens of friends with whom I maintain continual contact.

In August through October 1995, I continued to meet with the support group on a monthly basis and making new friends. I began volunteering time and energy to the society to help "get the word out" and in whatever capacity they needed me. I started to have a purpose in life again other than just "go to work, come home, repeat step (1) and (2)".

Through my numerous friends and after developing a deeper understanding of the

different colors of the gender spectrum. I was able to determine that I am indeed Transsexual and consider myself pre-operative at this time. My SO, Anna, and I have never been happier, and my family has strongly benefited from our renewed love and happier attitude.

In October of 1995, I told my three children, 2 daughters, 9 and 15, and a son, 7. I was more than shocked by their attitude -- they not only accepted my gender ID change with little more than a blink of an eye -- they started calling me "Mom" after the third day of congruent gender living. They refer to my SO (their genetic mother) as "Mommy" to tell the difference between us. The only complaint I have received from the children is from my son who is upset because I won't play roughhouse with him after I had just spent 45 minutes setting my hair. But, after my set falls apart (usually the next day), I chase him around the house and we have great fun.

In November 1995, I began to venture out of the house and see the world. First, I went to Austin (a two hour drive away) to go shopping with my teenager. It went wonderful -- although she underwent a slight 'panic attack' when I came face to face with my first "stranger" when ordering food from a drive-thru at McDonalds. After getting our food, she let out a big sigh, then a whoop of pleasure because she was so afraid that the girl in the drive-thru would ID me and make me feel sad. We had a wonderful evening of mother-daughter shopping and went home tired, broke, and with big smiles on our faces.

Since then, I have discovered that I 'pass' quite well. I have gone out dozens of times (even in the daytime) and had no reaction from anyone. Although I am 6' tall, I weigh only 140 pounds and I have a 36B, 28, 35 figure, Hazel-Green eyes, long and wavy shoulder length russett colored hair (a wig right now, but I'm working on it!) and the good fashion sense of a 15 year old teenager (my daughter). Luckily, her tastes are more conservative than most teenagers, and she has an eye for bargains. I have naturally effeminate gestures and am working well with my voice (deep and husky, but definitely feminine).

In early December, I told my mother, two sisters, and distant (life long) friends who live in Pennsylvania. Although surprised, no one has outright 'disowned' me (thankfully). They are coming to terms with it in their own way and just last week my eldest sister started using my femme name while talking to me on the phone. I think if I visit with them this summer then their concerns will dissipate. I have sent them volumes of information (some of which you originally sent to me) and photographs to help them visualize.

Although I do not live "full time - all the time" because of my work situation, I do live "full time at home" with my family. I spent last week on vacation from work and was able to stay congruent for the entire week. It was truly a wonderful and satisfying experience. My first day back to work was a little problematic because of the deep depression that set in when I had to adopt male clothes for the entire day.

I see a future. Never before did I truly 'see' a future. I now have a life that I am happy to live and look forward to each tomorrow with optimizum and pride. As soon as the work situation gets resolved (one way or the other) I will be complete.

None of this would have been possible had it not been for your kind help to a stranger who called to you on the phone one night scared and alone. You reached out to that voice in the darkness and provided a ray of hope. I can not thank the Ingersoll Center enough for everything you have done for me and my family. I mean, how do you properly thank someone for giving them a life? The only answer that even comes close to being partially enough is this: "I promise to use my new life well, treat others with respect, help others in need, and basically live my life as an example to others to follow!"

I sometimes go through Seattle on business trips and would really like to visit with the Center one day. I do not know exactly when I will visit Seattle next, but with your permission, I would like to make arrangements to spend a day or two there and get to know the people who helped me.

I pray the New Year finds you happy, healthy, and in the midst of loving spirits.

Friends always,

Mary E.

P.S. Please feel free to share this letter with everyone and anyone you would like to. I have come to realize that success stories like mine are rare in our people and it may give a ray of hope to someone else. HUGS!

P.P.S. Just another note. The other night, I was out at a cocktail lounge. They were short handed and asked ***ME*** to help the other "Waitress". It was a real trip. Thanks again.

Life is Either a Daring Adventure or Nothing
Helen Keller

INGERSOLL ON THE THE INTERNET

e-mail: mgersol@halcyon.com

Graphics WEBBrowser:

<URL http://www.halcyon.com/ingersol/inhome.html>

TEXTonly WEBBrowser:

<URL http://www.halcyon.com/ingersol/inhometext.html>

Important Ingersoll Doings in
FEBRUARY

All Wednesdays in February: TS Group (Referral Only) 7:30-9:30 PM

Thursdays in February : Drop-In Group (Open) 7-9 PM

All Fridays in February: TV/TS Support Group (Open) 8-10 PM

Phones answered Mondays & Fridays 6-8 pm and Saturdays 10-12 noon

February 12: Ingersoll Board meeting 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

February 13: FTM Support Group 7:30-9:30 PM First Timers must call Jason at 723-8805, or David at 859-1053 before attending Topic for this meeting Tricks of the Trade Binding, Padding

February 20: Full time, Post-Op group meeting, 7:30-9:30 PM

February 18: Sunday Afternoon At Ingersoll -- 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm. See advertisement in this month's newsletter.

February 24: FTM Support Group 3:30-5:30 PM First Timers must call Jason at 723-8805, or David at 859-1053 before attending Topic for this meeting

If you think you are too small to be effective, you've never been in bed with a mosquito!

Blessed are we who can laugh at ourselves, for we shall never cease to be amused.

SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLICATIONS

☞ At Ingersoll Center ☜

FROM FEMALE TO MALE: THE LIFE OF JACK BEE GARLAND

By Lou Sullivan

An in-depth look into the life of the popular female journalist at the turn of the century. Was Garland a female-to-male Transsexual before modern medical intervention?

Published by Alyson Publications, 128 pages

Available at Ingersoll after meetings or by mail.

At meetings: ***$9.95 per copy/tax included***

By Mail: ***$ 9.95 plus $1.75 p/h + (8.2% sales tax if app.)***

Angels

Can Fly Because They Take themselves

Lightly

From the Founder:

By Marsha Botzer, M.A

What are the most improtant beliefs you hold? Where does your gender identity fall in your list of beliefs? Perhaps you have tried to tell someone about your deepest sense of self and been given the question "But how do you *know*?" What can we say in return except "I *know*, I *feel*!" This little argument has silenced many, and caused us to withdraw from the conversation. Rather than offer a chance to feel the excitement of encountering a truly hard problem, we are sent away to doubt ourselves and to doubt the possibility of knowing any true thing about who we are.

Yet think of the people who ask us "How we know". Think of how they know about themselves. Are they not in the same predicament as we are -- unable to be clear about how they know they are *not* transsexual, transgendered, transvestite or crossdresser?

"Give to every human being every right that you claim for yourself."
Robert Green Ingersoll - Limits of Toleration

Ingersoll Internet Site Awarded 3 Stars by Magellan

Ingersoll's Web Page has been selected by The McKinley Group's professional editorial team as a "3-Star" site. This rating is a special mark of achievement in Magellan, McKinley's comprehensive Internet directory of over 1.5 million sites and 40,000 reviews. As a Magellan 3-Star site, we are being awarded a special logo to recognize the hard work that has gone into establishing and maintaining our site.

The aware announcement reads in part, "Here at The McKinley Group, we pride ourselves on our ability to recognize the best resources on the Net. Your site has been recognized as part of our rigorous review process, in which we consider three primary factors: depth of content, ease of exploration, and Net appeal. Congratulations again on your 3-Star award! We at The McKinley Group wish you continued success in all of your Internet endeavors."

The credit for this definitely goes to Kathy and Caryn for all their hard work on our Web Page. To date, over 6,500 people have visited our Web Page.

The Butler Did it!

By Pat Butler, Executive Director

Who You Are Makes A Difference

A teacher in New York decided to honor each of her seniors in high school by telling them the difference they each made. Using a process developed by Helice Bridges of Del Mar, California, she called each student to the front of the class, one at a time. First she told them how the student made a difference to her and to the class. Then she presented each of them with a blue ribbon imprinted with gold letters which read, "Who I Am Makes A Difference."

Afterwards, the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community. She gave each of the students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. Then they were to follow up on the results, see who honored whom and report back to the class in about a week.

One of the boys in the class went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with his career planning. He gave him a blue ribbon and put it on his shirt. Then he gave him two extra ribbons, and said, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to go out find somebody to honor, give them a blue ribbon, then give them the extra blue ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person to keep this acknowledgment going. Then please report back to me and tell me what happened.

Later that day the junior executive went in to see his boss, who had been noted, by the way, as being kind of a grouchy fellow. He sat his boss down and told him he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. The junior executive asked him if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon and would give him permission to put it on him. His surprised boss said, "Well, sure."

The junior executive took the blue ribbon and placed it on his boss's jacket above his heart. As he gave him the last ribbon, he said, "Would you do me a favor? Would you take this extra ribbon and pass it on by honoring somebody else? The young boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school and we want to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people."

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, "The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of the junior executives came in and told me he admired me for being a creative genius. Then he put this blue ribbon on my jacket above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about whom I would honor with this ribbon and I thought of you. I want to honor you. My days are really hectic and when I come home I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess, but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and, well, just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid and I love you."

The startled boy started to sob and sob, and he couldn't stop crying. His who body shook. He looked up at his father and said through his tears, "I was planning on committing suicide tomorrow, Dad, because I didn't think you loved me. Now I don't need to..."

SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLICATIONS

☞ **At Ingersoll Center** ☜

COMING SOON TO INGERSOLL!!

THE MONTREAL EXPERIENCE

and

THE PORTLAND EXPERIENCE

Companion books to ***The Brussels Experience*** and ***The Trinidad Experience.***

Coming in APRIL, 1996

FACILITATOR'S FORUM

By Suzanne Adams

Perhaps one of the most satisfying feelings is when several group members come up to the facilitator after a group meeting and say, "That was one of the best meetings!" This has happened to all of us facilitators, and we discuss some of the "best meetings" among ourselves, and find that there is one common denominator: positive interaction between group members. The key word here is "positive". There are so many negative things that we can dwell upon when discussing change in our gender roles, e.g. family non-acceptance, loss of friends, and society's rules to name a few. However, when these same issues are discussed in a *positive* frame of reference, all of a sudden group members come up with ideas, examples, personal stories of how it was handled by them and suddenly all the members of the group are talking at once.

the reason many of us attend the groups is to uplift our spirits, and discuss positive ways of handling the problems that arise. We all know that many people have traveled the gender trail before us, but it sometimes seems that only *I* have this particular problem to face. After a rousing discussion of a timely topic, we suddenly discover that it is no longer an *I* problem. It is not a *We* problem and others really have faced the same event or incident. That is when we find satisfaction in attending a group session.

When you are in a group session, and you have a particular problem you are facing, bring it up at check-in or during a general discussion, instead of sitting and trying to make everyone feel sorry for you. Instead, ask for suggestions for trying to solve or cope with it. You will find that someone there has knowledge of the same problem, either personally or through awareness of others who have confronted the same issue.

So, remember to keep a positive approach when you are discussing something and you too will be a major participant in "One of the best meetings!"

EMERALD CITY

206-827-9494

PHONES ANSWERED TUESDAYS 7:00 PM 10:00 PM

For Crossdressers. Meetings and social gatherings. Safe, discreet, and confidential. A place to be all you want to be!

Chinese Openness Debuts With Transsexual Dancer

Excerpted from the January 20, 1996, Los Angeles Times by Pat Butler

BEIJING, -- In something of a cultural and sexual milestone for China, modern dancer Jin Xing made her debut Friday night in a packed auditorium owned by the People's Liberation Army.

Jin was already one of China's most famous dancers before this event -- but as a man.

Beginning in 1989, Jin spent four years in the United States and Italy studying and performing with the Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey dance groups.

"His" [quotes mine] award as "best choreographer" in the 1991 American Dance Festival in North Carolina won the dancer renown in China, which relishes overseas recognition of its cultural and athletic achievements.

But when Jin -- who held the rank of army colonel with the PLA dance troupe where "he" started at the age of 9 -- returned home to China in 1993, "he" petitioned the government to undergo sex-change operations to become a woman.

"He" told the government that "he" was not a homosexual, but had been sexually attracted to "men who like women."

"When I was a child, I dreamed of becoming a girl," Jin said.

Jin's dream of dancing as a woman was finally realized Friday. As the curtain opened, a spotlight caught the dancer in frozen profile sitting in a long silk dress on a park bench set at center stage. Later, she performed in a sheer red chiffon dress that revealed some of the heavy musculature Jin had developed as a male dancer.

'Of course, in society's eyes, this was a debut for me because of the change," she said after the performance. "But I approached it as another phase in my dancing career. I'm still a little strong for a woman dancer, but the possibilities for expression are greater."

Curgical and cosmetic sex-change operations are rare in China and require government approval. According to one report, there are 30,000 cases of

Chinese petitioning the government for such procedures. But knowledgeable medical personnel say only a few hundred are likely to be approved each year, depending on the political climate. Dancer Jin, 28, began the series of operations in January 1994 at a specialized cosmetic-surgery hospital west of Beijing.

A state television network prepared a documentary on Jin's life in hopes that it would inspire other Chinese with sexual identity problems, and the sudden openness on the part of the normally puritanical Communist regime was widely viewed as a new trend toward tolerance.

During her long hospitalization and treatment, Jin planned the concert as a return to the stage with her new 18-member troupe, the Beijing Modern Dance Ensemble. Several Communist beaurocrats hit the roof when learning of the performance and it was threatened with cancellation.

But after days of tension, someone else intervened and the event was permitted, quickly selling out its three performances.

Join Us In February for:

S.R.S. SUNDAY

A Viewing of the Surgery videos

February 18, 1996

2:00-5:00 at Ingersoll.

Join us for Food, Good Conversation, and more!

from All of Us at Ingersoll Center:

Marsha Sandra J. Sandra F.
Howard Louisa Bryant
Jaye Marian Suzanne Pat
Jason Kristen Allison, Dee David
Kimberley Aleena Jude Sara Lindsay
Rochelle Lee Denise Sonja

It takes **Courage** *to grow up*
and turn out to be who you really are.
e.e. cummings

Beginning this month, the Cook's corner will be replaced with a series of "Heart Healthy" recipes from the American Heart Association. Enjoy.

American Heart Association
Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

Help Your Heart Recipes

This recipe is intended to be part of an overall healthful eating plan. Total fat intake should be less than 30 percent of your total calories for a day — not for each food or recipe.

Three-Bean Chili

- 1 28-ounce can no-salt-added tomatoes, cut up
- 1 15½-ounce can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can no-salt-added pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 12-ounce can light beer or nonalcoholic beer
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ cup plain nonfat yogurt
- Chopped fresh parsley (optional)

In a large saucepan, combine tomatoes, beans, beer, chili powder and cumin. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on desired consistency.

Pour chili into 4 bowls. Top each serving with a dollop of yogurt and sprinkle with parsley if desired.

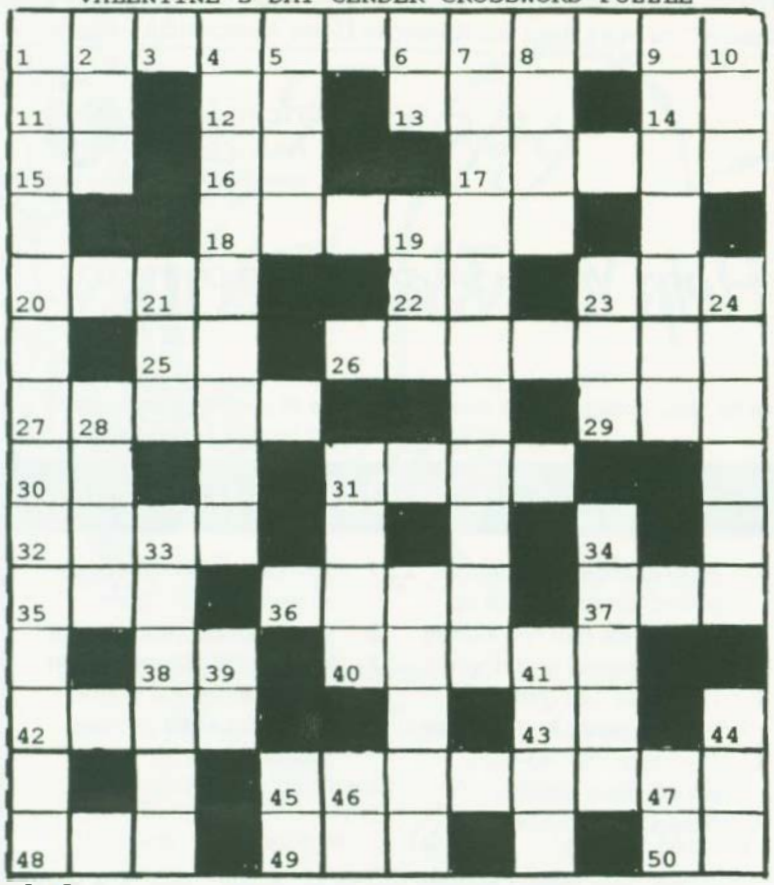
Serves 4 as a main dish; 1¾ cups per serving. Preparation time: 10 minutes. Cooking time: 10 to 15 minutes.

Nutrient Analysis per Serving

411 kcal	Calories	1 mg	Cholesterol	1 gm	Saturated Fat
23 gm	Protein	275 mg	Sodium	2 gm	Polyunsaturated Fat
70 gm	Carbohydrate	4 gm	Total Fat	1 gm	Monounsaturated Fat

American Heart Association Quick & Easy Cookbook
©1995. Reprinted with permission from Times Books.

VALENTINE'S DAY GENDER CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1 All these cards sent to me are _____

11 Friend or F_ _?

12 Southeast (abbr)

13 A half circle

14 Don't forget to _ _ te

15 Symbol for radium

16 Valentines are _ U _ !

17 Heavenly being

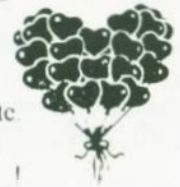
18 _____ is better than hating

20 Italian for wine

22 Writer _ _ Lewis

23 Another name for brooch

25 A hurt sound



26 What Bob does when he receives a Valentine (2wds)

27 Significant Other

29 Islamic ruler's title ____ Khan

30 Get rec_ _ ve

31 Manage, watch over

32 Wal_ _ Pea_ _ Brazil ____

35 Black and Sticky

35 Valentine, I love your _____

37 Olympia's nickname

38 Early day

40 Valentine's day _____

42 Most T's change their _____

43 L_V_

Across (cont.)

45 Mom didn't get a valentine, and ____ ____ ___ trouble

48 A nickname for my female sibling

DOWN

1 What's even better than 1 valentine?

2 A yell of appreciation

3 Morse Code for it is ___ ___

4 Give a gift, such __ _____

5 Tonight Show host Jay _____

6 Not applicable (init)

7 TG spelled out

8 _ _ I _ _ on the cake

9 You deserve an _____ out

10 Terran sun

19 Really hard water

21 November (abbr)

23 Actress Zadora

24 Fat '_ _____!

49 Woman's name

50 Two adjacent compass points

28 All the vowels except 'e'. You figure out the order

31 Copy _ _ _ _ c

33 Hobos

34 Usually a dozen

39 You and ___

41 Several who died before they reached the hospitals (init)

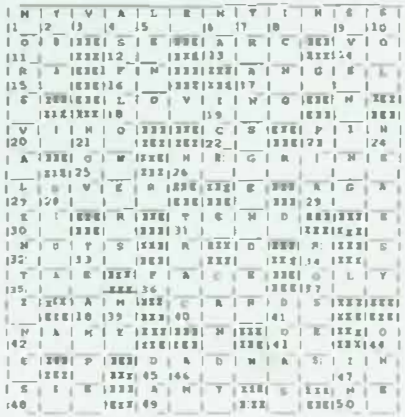
44 The number which can be lonely

45 District Attorney (init)

46 You are, he is, I ____

47 Out's other half

When your Heart Speaks, Take Good Notes...



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----------DETACH HERE----------

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ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

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