

Renaissance News



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Vision - Integrity - Quality

May, 1992

Remember 1987?

Renaissance was highpoint of troubled year

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Remember 1987? That was when Renaissance was founded. The 9 transvestites, 1 transsexual and 3 partners who gathered at The Woods on that evening in May knew they were starting something big. Within just seven months, attendance at the meetings had ballooned to 50, and it has been growing every since.

But as hard as it is to believe, other things happened that year as well. Yes, it was five years ago that Renaissance burst onto the scene in the company of people like Judge Robert H. Bork, Donna Rice, Lt. Col. Oliver North, and Gary Heidnik.

Actually, 1987 wasn't all that bad a year. Sure, the stock market crashed in October, but we had celebrated the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution a month before. President Reagan struck out twice with Supreme Court nominees Bork and Judge Douglas H. Ginsburg, but Mike Schmidt of the Phillies got his 500th home run and Julius Erving of the 76ers scored his 30,000th point.

There is a lot to remember 1987 for besides the creation of Renais-

sance.

How about Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker? Their PTL television ministry had soared during the decade, based on their declared premise of "Praise the Lord." But when Bakker's sexual fling with church secretary Jessica Hahn was revealed to the public, the empire quickly crumbled amid jokes about PTL actually standing for "Pass the Loot" and most of the millions the couple took in being used to pay Tammy Faye's makeup bills. T-shirts carrying her smudged image and the caption "I ran into Tammy Faye at the mall" were hot items for awhile.

Hahn formed part of a triad of

long-tressed blondes who made it into the headlines in 1987. Donna Rice's affair with Colorado Sen. Gary Hart undid his presidential campaign, while secretary Fawn Hall's loyalty to her boss, Lt. Col. North, made her the cover girl of the Iran-contra proceedings. She even bumped off Vanna White in one of those year-end in/out lists. But the Marines took a hit when Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree was sentenced to 30 years in prison for selling secrets to the Soviet KGB back when there was a Soviet Union and a Cold War.

Secrets of another sort were uncovered by police in North Philadel-

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A modest proposal

The story behind the Mona Lisa logo; is it time for a change?

Five years ago, when the Renaissance Education Association was just beginning, the board reached back to the other Renaissance for a symbol for the organization, adopting Mona Lisa as its emblem.

This famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci fit the bill for a number of reasons: The image is readily identified with the Renaissance, her enigmatic smile suggests she has a secret — as do many transgendered persons, and it is a feminine image. Or is it?

In 1986, computer artist Lillian Schwartz made headlines with the suggestion that Mona Lisa was actually a self-portrait of da Vinci in drag. She compared the famous painting with a contemporary draw-

ing of the artist and said that the painting was an exact mirror image of the drawing. She strengthened her claim by saying that da Vinci was known to use a mirror-image script in his journals and so painted the portrait in the same reversed manner to reveal that he was gay, something that scholars had long suspected.

Several years later, Schwartz's theory was disproved when documents identifying the actual Mona Lisa were found in Italy. But by then it was too late for Renaissance. We picked our logo and were stuck with it.

But maybe not. Schwartz has been playing with her computer

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Inside...

New life for Philadelphia Mayor's commission.

IFGE Congress of Reps declares independence.

Mayor revives sexual minorities commission with some changes

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Four months into his administration, Philadelphia Mayor Edward G. Rendell has revived the Mayor's Commission for Sexual Minorities (MCSM) and has reappointed a transgendered person to the panel.

Whitney Brown will represent the transgendered community. The transsexual first served as a commissioner under former Mayor W. Wilson Goode. Another transgendered commissioner, Kelly Harris, was not reappointed. Both women are affiliated with Renaissance.

"I am very glad that the mayor has finally reestablished the commission," Brown said. "It is important for lesbians and gays, but it is even more important for transgendered persons. Lesbians and gays could always take complaints to the Human Relations Commission under the anti-discrimination law. But transvestites and transsexuals have no other representation."

Rendell called the commissioners "a talented group with extensive experience in their designated fields of expertise." He said he will use the commission "in the formation of policy recommendations" which will be sent "directly to me."

Goode's 1984 executive order establishing the commission said that the panel would continue only while he was in office; his successor would have to renew it if he chose. During last year's mayoral campaign, Rendell pledged that he would do just that. But action was slow in coming, causing worries that the commission would languish for many months or even become extinct.

In March, the commission office, in a building leased by the city on Sansom Street, was locked, and office equipment and files were moved out. This prompted some members of the community to predict that the commission had a "50-50" chance of

survival. City officials, however, repeated the mayor's campaign promise that the commission would be reauthorized.

"The mayor is moving slower than we hoped in reauthorizing the various commissions," Assistant Deputy Mayor John Herzin said at the time.

Finally last month, the mayor acted. Herzin telephoned prospective commissioners to ascertain if they would serve under Rendell, and within a week the city announced the composition of the renewed MCSM.

There are, however, several administrative changes common to the other mayoral commissions. Because of the city's dire financial straits, no replacement will be named for former Executive Director Peg Conway who resigned in November. Instead, Kevin Vaughn, the openly gay executive director of the Commission on Human Relations, will serve in that function under the title Mayor's Staff Director. MCSM will have no office space — at least until the beginning of the new fiscal year; it will meet and conduct business in the mayor's reception room in City Hall. In addition, Deputy Mayor Ben Ramos, who handles community relations for the Rendell administration, will over-

see the operation of the various mayor's commissions and provide clerical and computer support.

At the present time, there is no MCSM phone, but inquiries and complaints may be directed to Vaughn or Ramos at 686-1776.

Serving on the renewed commission with Brown are Co-Chairs Rebecca Alpert and Jesse Milan and members Norman Baker, Irene Beneditti, Jim Dane, Angela Figueroa, Donna Gallagher, Oscar Garcia-Vega, Jerry Gregory, Victor Jones, Robert Landus, Rich Liu, Rick Lombardo, Marge McCann, Samantha Morse, Connie Ratliff-Campbell, Ronnie Rodriguez, Peter Sanchez, and Valerie West.

The commission also has representatives from the city police, health, personnel, and human relations departments as well as the School District of Philadelphia. Those members have not been named.

At press time, the commission had not yet met, and no decision had been made on renewing the Transgendered Issues Work Group or establishing some other advisory body on transgendered matters. Brown said she would make this a high priority item.

Speakers bureau spins off from MCSM

Late last year, the Mayor's Commission for Sexual Minorities (MCSM) formed a speakers bureau that included transgendered representatives. Both JoAnn Roberts and Beth Marshall, members of the Renaissance national board, are part of the bureau.

Early this year, while the MCSM's future was unclear, the speakers bureau established itself as a separate entity and renamed itself Voices of Diversity.

The bureau is planning to incor-

porate and apply for tax-exempt status. At this time, the bureau's steering committee is looking for candidates to serve on the bureau's first board of directors and, in particular, is looking for more people of color to participate.

Meanwhile, Voices of Diversity continues to provide speakers for groups, schools, colleges, churches, and community organizations. To contact the speakers bureau write P.O. Box 32081, Philadelphia, PA 19146, or call (215) 848-2297.

Canadian sex researchers say birth trauma may cause transsexualism

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

What causes gender dysphoria, specifically transsexualism?

For years, that question has intrigued not only scientists and transsexuals themselves but also the general public. There are generally three choices...

- Can transsexualism be traced to the genetic code, written at the point of conception?

- Did hormones in the womb cause the embryo to develop the body of one sex and the mind of another: reduced testosterone levels resulting in a feminized brain in a male body and higher levels resulting in a masculinized brain in a female body?

- Or is environment the cause?

While the real answer still isn't known, two Canadian researchers have come up with an hypothesis by

looking at another physical trait, left-handedness.

Drs. Diane B. Watson and Stanley Coren of the University of British Columbia presented their theory in a letter published in the March 11 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

They cite a decade of research that shows being left-handed may be related to one of two events: elevated testosterone levels in the womb before birth or prenatal stress, such as low birth weight, prolonged labor, multiple births, Rh incompatibilities, the severe lack of oxygen during birth, breech births, and premature births.

Watson and Coren tested 45 male-to-female transsexuals enrolled in the treatment program at the Vancouver General Hospital Gender Dysphoria Clinic to see how many

were left-handed and how many were right-handed. This sample group was compared to a control group of 225 genetic males randomly selected by a computer from a pool of 10,000 men. The only restriction on selection for the control group was that those men must be the same ages as the transsexuals.

Both groups were tested for left- or right-handedness in the same way. Watson and Coren found that 11.6 percent were left handed, which they say is close to the accepted rate. But among the transsexuals, 35.6 percent were left-handed, more than three times the expected rate.

"If increased feminization of the male-to-female transsexuals was due to reduced testosterone levels, we would have expected fewer left-handed subjects in this sample."

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Congress of Reps defeats IFGE annexation bid, elects officers

The Congress of Representatives to the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) last month asserted its autonomy and successfully avoided a take-over orchestrated by IFGE Executive Director Merissa Sherrill Lynn. In doing so, the congress made it clear to IFGE that the member organizations comprising the congress enjoyed and cherished their independence.

The Congress of Representatives was an idea proposed four years ago by Alison Laing and JoAnn Roberts, both of Renaissance. The problem, as they saw it, was that the IFGE board was limited in its representation, and many support groups around the country had no way of providing input to it. The congressional concept would permit individual organizations to designate their own representatives who would reflect the needs of the parent organizations. The congress as a whole would present its recommendations to the IFGE board of directors.

At first, Lynn was opposed to the congress. She later changed her mind when it was explained that the proposed body could be a two-way conduit for communication between IFGE and the member groups. Thus, IFGE also agreed to publish a quarterly newsletter for the congress containing news from the community; the *IFGE Update* was born.

The first several years of congressional existence were unremarkable. A chair was elected at each meeting during the IFGE annual convention, but the chair always seemed to be vacant by the time the next meeting rolled around. Lynn apparently meant to correct this problem with a resolution that would have made the congress an annex of the IFGE board of directors.

During the scheduled meeting of the congress during the 6th Annual IFGE convention in Houston last month, Lynn read her proposal that the Congress of Representatives be made a standing committee of the IFGE board with a chair appointed by the IFGE board. Her proposal also contained a preamble that implied no one in IFGE knew what the congress was supposed to be doing and that it had not accomplished anything since its inception. It was perhaps that statement that set off the fire storm of reaction that followed.

It's politics as usual at the annual IFGE convention in Houston until the spirit of independence moves the Congress of Representatives.

Laing, Roberts, and others pointed out that Lynn's proposal was directed to the IFGE board and not the congress itself. They also noted that the IFGE board could take any action it liked with respect to the congress, but that any such action would be non-binding since the IFGE board had no authority over the congress. Laing then read a prepared statement that reasserted the autonomy of the congress and recommended the group elect its own chair, vice-chair, and recording secretary. This proposal also made it clear that the congress was not a committee nor any other part of the IFGE board.

Inspired by the Laing-Roberts statement and led by Naomi Owen of Chi Chapter, Tri-Ess, the assembled group passed a series of

unanimous motions in rapid succession, that reestablished its autonomy; elected Laing as chair, Linda Phillips (Bolton & Park) as vice-chair, and Victoria Mansfield (Indiana Crossdressers Society) as recording secretary; and established a working group to draft a new statement of purpose. The representatives also voted unanimously to meet a second time during the convention — unprecedented in the history of the IFGE convention — to ratify the statement of purpose.

Lynn left the congress meeting during a short recess and did not return. Later, however, at the annual meeting of the IFGE board, Lynn proposed a definition of membership in IFGE that would have permitted nonprofit organizations to become members of IFGE by becoming members of the Congress of Representatives. The board tabled the proposal. Lynn then withdrew her Congress of Representatives proposal without discussion. The two-pronged approach to bring the congress under the wing of the board had failed.

As the board meeting neared closing, Nancy Cole, Vice-Chair of the board, invited Laing to make a brief statement on behalf of the congress. However, before Laing could speak, Lynn said, "I want this on the record. The Congress of Representatives has *no* status with IFGE." Other members of the board, including Cole, disagreed, and the congressional statement was read into the record.

Laing recommended that IFGE appoint a board member as liaison to the congress to insure communication. A motion was made and passed with only one "nay." The chair of the board will select the liaison at a later date.

THE **NEWSQUEEN**™
Paula Jordan Sinclair

Maybe it's her celebrity status; maybe it's jitters over her impending nuptials; maybe she was misquoted. But whatever the reason, a recent statement from Tula has us scratching our head.

"A lot of people confuse transsexuals and transvestites," she was quoted as saying by *The Times* of London. "I had a letter from a transvestite, but I don't know what to say to him because it's totally different. I mean I'd be horrified if I was married to someone and came home and found him in women's clothes — and I'm quite broad minded."

A lot of people confuse celebrities with experts, too.



Good thing Tula wasn't called on to model at the fall fashion shows in Paris recently; she would have had kittens. One remarkable event was Susanne Bartsch's party, held twice a year to coincide with the biannual shows. This year's event featured drag queens and was described as "scandalous."

One fashion writer said the event was "so outrageous and lewd that it made the shady events in last year's hit documentary about gay balls, *Paris Is Burning*, look like a Camp Fire Girls party." But it appears that the drag queens were not to blame. Bartsch's "girls" paraded about La Palace in serious lingerie, 1940s Hollywood glamour ensembles, and ball gowns encrusted with jewels. Pretty tame stuff until the main entertainment began: Hennessy Brown, star of New York sex clubs, who performed lewd and unmentionable acts on stage. Later, couples from the audience did the same.



Drag queen Joan Jett Blakk was parading about Chicago on St Patrick's Day. The always-outrageous but ever-tasteful presidential candidate was smartly attired in a faux leopard coat and

strands of respectable pearls.

She led an ad hoc lesbian and gay contingent that marched down Dearborn Street in the Loop without incident, unlike what happened in Boston and New York when lesbians and gays joined the parades in those cities.

"I can't believe we did it and none of us got hurt," she said at the parade's conclusion. "We made it! We're here, we're queer, and we didn't get any bottles in the head! And people knew who we were! People were yelling 'Joan Jett Blakk!'"

Earlier, she had said she wouldn't march in the parade unless she got enough security. "I'm not going out there dressed in a green skirt and red bow alone, surrounded by people who have been drinking green beer all day," she said.

Earlier in the month, Blakk crashed a \$150-a-plate Democratic fundraiser that featured Geraldine Ferraro as keynote speaker. She said Ferraro made it a point to meet her afterward. "She was actually very sweet," Blakk said.



Blakk isn't the only transgendered political candidate this year. Transsexual Christina Hayworth is an official independent candidate for mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Hayworth has made AIDS her top campaign issue. "The AIDS/HIV population will increase fourfold in the next year," she said, "but the government is refusing to give out condoms. It's time to look for someone who has been a fighter and organizer."

To assist her campaign, call (809) 723-8233.



While on the subject of health, the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last month relaxed its restriction on new use of silicone gel breast implants. But the news is not good for

transgendered persons who are seeking augmentation.

Implants now can be used by cancer patients and others who need reconstructive surgery, such as those with "serious congenital deformities." But the operation can only be performed if doctors are convinced the procedure is necessary for their patient's well-being. Augmentation on demand is a thing of the past.

But there may be some hope for those who are determined. So far, the FDA has not defined "serious congenital deformities."



Speaking of serious congenital problems, that seems to be what is ailing Pete Brown, a retired businessman from Taunton, England. He claims to have invented a bra fitted with water-filled bags that will do away with the need for breast augmentation surgery.

Brown said he came up with the idea several years ago when he had to dress as a woman for a play in the village. "I got a big bra and some plastic freezer bags and filled 'em up with water" he said. "The bags kept trying to fall out of my bra, but they looked awful realistic under my dress, and all in all, I think I looked pretty good as a girl."

The man is obviously a loony. Everybody *knows* that JoAnn Roberts invented the water-filled, plastic bag breast form (complete with internal shock absorber) as a spin-off from a NASA contract.



We can add Brown to a growing list of British eccentrics which now includes:

- an aristocrat named Lucinda who has volunteered to be sacrificed in a volcano. She awaits her fate by taking her pet lobster for walks on a leash;
- a modern-day Robin Hood who stalks London parks in green tights and a peaked hat. He doesn't steal; he just stalks; and
- a man who rappels down the

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sides of skyscrapers dressed as a pink elephant.

And some think Phaedra Kelly is odd!



We know Miss Kelly can take a joke. But her work on behalf of transgendered people around the world is no joking matter. Recently, she was on an outreach mission to Turkey, partially funded by Renaissance. It may not be a coincidence that Amnesty International has just accepted the case of Ramazam "Demet" Demir, a transgendered and gay activist who was arrested last August during a raid on the Cihangir area of Istanbul's Beyoglu district.

Police had vowed to cleanse the area of transvestites, although Amnesty said police told him he was being arrested because he is gay.

According to Amnesty, "Demir is a prisoner of conscience. Amnesty International is appealing for his immediate and unconditional release."

Demir is protected under the new Amnesty International mandate that covers transgendered people who are assumed to be homosexual.



There have been many reports of mistreatment of transsexuals in American prisons. At least one transgendered inmate has received fairness at the hands of a federal jury in Detroit.

After a four-day civil trial, the jury decided that state prison guard Gerald Worley coerced Tracy Lynn Johnson to perform oral sex in exchange for providing protection from other inmates. Johnson, 44, is serving a life sentence at the state prison in Jackson for kidnapping and armed robbery. She continues to take female hormones in prison but has not had surgery.

A separate trial was to be held to determine the amount of damages to be awarded to Johnson,



An Oakland, Calif., transsexual is hoping to be just as successful in Alameda County Superior Court. Barbara Morehead claims that she was fired from her job as a book-keeper because she is undergoing sex reassignment therapy.

Morehead said that her supervisor, Anna Pellegrino, became hostile and remote toward her after Morehead confided that she is a transsexual. Only days later, Morehead was fired for incompetence.

Because, she said, she was never previously told her work was unsatisfactory, she believes she was fired because of her transsexualism.



Morehead's suit charges sex discrimination. But other transsexuals have had success in their anti-discrimination lawsuits by claiming disability status, most recently in Florida and Washington (RN, April, '92). Renaissance recently helped a publication for personnel managers spread the word about these cases and educate employers about the law.

Human Resources: Guide to Employment Law and Regulation reported on those cases and then advised employers "that these aren't necessarily isolated cases.... While claims by transsexuals aren't common, there are as many as 20,000 persons in the U.S. who have had gender reassignment surgery, and the number of individuals who have initiated transsexual therapy could run over 100,000, according to the Renaissance Education Association, Inc., a transsexual support and advocacy group. So employers should be aware that employees undergoing gender dysphoria treatment may have accommodation rights under state law and should be treated as individuals with handicaps."

That's telling them!



The NewsQueen was pleased that

she had information available to help executive editor Gary Tulacz with his research on transsexuals in the workplace. She was equally glad that he didn't ask if Bruce Jenner is having a sex change or if Lady Colin Campbell is a hermaphrodite, for she would hate to admit that she isn't sure on either score. Here's the background...

A tidbit in a newspaper celebrity column recently reported that Jenner, "the former Olympic athlete, is apparently going for a 'softer' look and is taking female hormones that are 'giving him boobs,' reports the April 7 *Globe*."

Another similar column in a different publication quotes thusly from a *USA Today* report on Lady Campbell, author of the tell-all biography of Princess Diana — *Diana in Private: The Princess Nobody Knows*. "The Jamaican-born author was in a nasty mood at a press conference, possibly because she faced questions as to whether she was a hermaphrodite...."

We wish these writers would stop dropping hints and dish *all* the dirt. If any of the NewsQueen's readers have the complete story on either of these celebrities, she would welcome the details.



Finally, here's a brain teaser: data compiled by The Gillette Company — and reported in *Adweek* magazine — shows that when men cut themselves while shaving their faces, they blame the razor, but when women nick their legs or underarms, they blame themselves.

So who or what gets the blame when a transvestite cuts his legs or underarms?

While you puzzle over the answer, gentle readers, continue to send clippings about crossdressing to Miss Sinclair at the Renaissance office. Please note the name and date of publication. Thanks this month to two Michigan girls from Spartan country, Becky and Lisa.

Sex change at age 18 was involuntary; counseling helps her cope at age 35

By Jeffrey Zaslow

DEAR ZAZZ:

You recently wrote about a homosexual who, in an effort to please his manipulative boyfriend, had a sex change operation he/she now regrets (*RN*, Nov. '91). "Sharon's" situation is similar to my own.

For me, it was my mother who wanted me to be a girl, and eventually, she got her way.

My parents were divorced before I was born, and I was an only child. From the moment I was born, my mother was disappointed that I was a boy. She gave me a unisex name and did all she could to establish my identity as female. She'd shame me out of having male interests.

Before I entered junior high school, we moved to another state, and Mom decided that I was going to become a girl once and for all. She worked in a medical field and got hormones fairly easily. She began to give me doses of female hormones, and because I hadn't started puberty, they had a dramatic effect on my body. By the time school started, I had curls, used makeup, and needed a training bra.

During high school, my voice did not get lower and I developed a feminine figure, including a large bust. The final step was an operation just after I turned 18. At that point, I had no doubts about doing this

because I trusted my mother. I lost my virginity during senior prom weekend.

At age 20, I became a secretary. It was then — on my own — that I began to wonder about the masculinity that was somewhere inside me. For the next eight years, I went through varying degrees of depression, doubt, and frustration. I had problems on my job because my appearance became bizarre as I tried to look less feminine and more masculine.

Finally, I found a good therapist who helped me understand that I did not really want to be a male because I knew nothing about what that was like. I was, however, very angry at my mother for taking control of my life in such an irreversible way. My anger was compounded because of the sexism I experienced. I was angry at men for the way they treated us as women, while I also felt cheated because I was not one of them.

In the end, I came to realize that I could be happy as a woman. At age 35, I am confident in my status as a woman and can maintain stable friendships with both men and women and romantic relationships with men.

As for Sharon, she needs to accept that physically, it's impossible to become a man again. But if she finds a good counselor, she can come

to terms with herself. She probably can't remain with her boyfriend because of his role in her life. However, she may be able to comfortably remain as a woman in an environment more of her own choosing. I hope she finds peace.

— ENJOYS BEING A WOMAN
DEAR ENJOYS:

Your mother's actions were sick and criminal, and I question any doctor who'd perform such surgery on an 18-year-old. It's lucky you found your way to sanity.

Even those who decide to change sexes on their own have great troubles adjusting. For information on transsexual self-help groups, readers can contact the International Foundation for Gender Education, (617) 899-2212, or the Renaissance Education Association, (215) 630-1437.

Readers interested in a state-by-state listing of self-help groups can send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Transsexual Information c/o Zazz, P.O. Box 3455, Chicago, IL 60654.

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⇒ Mr. Zaslow succeeded Ann Landers as the Chicago Sun-Times advice columnist. His column is syndicated in more than 50 newspapers around the nation.

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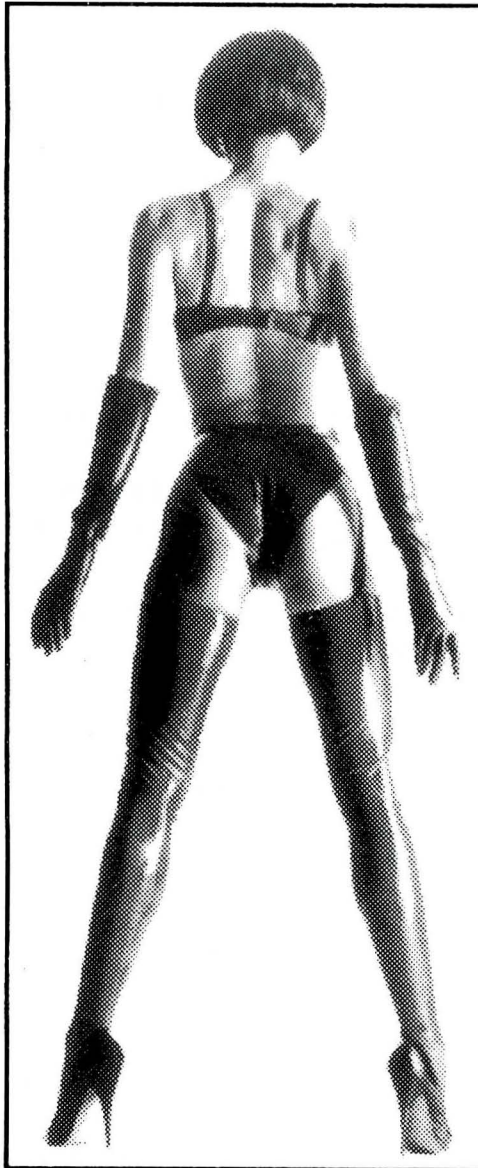
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The **FORUM** For Ideas

Is this why women hate crossdressers?

by Christine Beatty

Why do many women fear and/or despise transvestites, transsexuals, and other transgendered persons?

Six years ago, during my first attempt at transsexual transition, I couldn't understand why some women just hated what I was doing. I thought that women — especially outspoken feminists — should welcome me with open arms. After all, I was a former male oppressor who renounced his male privilege and joined the sisterhood. Why couldn't these women see that I was on their side? Likewise, other transgendered people might also wonder why some women have a problem with their behavior.

In the last few years, I have gotten some insight into women's attitudes toward this subject. By and large, women have the same objections to the perpetual crossgenderism of transsexuals as to the periodic forays into womanhood of transvestites. Being a transsexual female who was born and raised male and who lived as a male most of her life, I can't say I know exactly what genetic women think. Yet, through my close associations with born females of many orientations and politics, and through an earnest attempt at projection into their shoes, I have come to a few conclusions as to why we bother some women.

One of the main reasons we draw fire from women — especially feminists — is the often unqualified assertions that we *are* women, that we *feel* like women, or that we otherwise know what it means to *be* women. Very few crossgendered folks — except possibly a handful of primary transsexuals who were raised as females — have any idea of what it is like to be born and grow up as a woman. Furthermore, many of us have or had male privilege whether we enjoyed it or not. That is something no woman can say.

On the other hand, there are some things we can never know: the pains and difficulties of monthly menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth or the lifelong treatment as a second-class citizen. Put yourself in a genetic woman's shoes for just one minute. Given all of the trials you have experienced over a lifetime of being female, might you not be slightly vexed to see a genetic male climb into a dress, maybe take a few hormones, and declare himself a woman without any qualifications?

Calm down, I *know* how much crossgendered people suffer. My pre- and mid-transitional life has been painful, and I don't expect life to be a bowl of cherries after my surgery either. Many of my friends who are genetic females acknowledge that fact, and that is one of the reasons

they can relate to me as a woman at all. They know that I have suffered because of my gender, although differently than they have, and that wasn't something I chose. Similarly, transvestites also experience pain when they keep this part of themselves locked away. By communicating their feelings to women, they may also find empathy instead of fear and hostility.

It is important that I qualify my femaleness to women who don't fully understand my gender dilemma. Rather than making a presumptuous statement about feeling like a woman, I say that I feel the way I imagine many women do. By doing this, I am speaking from my experiences and perceptions, and I keep myself grounded in reality. In this way I have managed to gain acceptance even among my more radically feminist friends. By explaining myself to them and by not trying to take anything away from their experiences, I have made it possible for them to feel okay about calling me "she." I wouldn't have such acceptance if I had *insisted* on their use of that pronoun.

Another way "transies" incur the wrath of women is by acting as though our stereotypical view of womanhood is the last word on the subject. Feminists, in particular, get

(continued on page 13)

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The *For Ideas*
FORUM

Birthday greetings from across the pond

To the Editor:

I regret that I am unable to join your celebration this month, but the International Gender Transit Affinity, myself, and my family send warmest congratulations on Renaissance's fifth anniversary. We also convey the same from the world community in our shared network

to whom Renaissance has become a working lifeline and an indispensable aid.

The road to hell, it has been said, is paved with good intentions, but a willingness to back those intentions with actions has proven to be the route to heaven. Please continue to publish news, raise consciousness,

challenge hypocrisy, inspire, explore and expand ideas, and be as true to yourself, Renaissance, as you have been these past five years — and for many more to come.

Happy Birthday!

—Phaedra Kelly
Isle of Wight, U.K.

And thanks from a sister in Maryland

To the Editor:

Thank you all for allowing me to come to the Renaissance meeting on March 21.

Thanks to Paula for providing me with a ride from downtown Philadelphia to the meeting in spite of her last-minute problem preventing her attendance.

Thanks to Michelle and C.J. for looking for a ride for me back to town, and for C.J.'s offer to provide it.

Thanks to Miss X who actually drove me back to town. I am embarrassed to admit that in spite of a long, non-stop conversation while traveling, I forgot Ms. X's name.

I was truly impressed with the turnout at the meeting. I was more impressed with Dr. Kirk's presentation. It was an extremely difficult subject made quite

comprehensible.

March 21 was the first time I've been to a transgendered meeting in many years. Since I was not crossdressed, I felt a little uncomfortable about mixing and talking despite your broad-mindedness. In the past — when crossdressed — I did not have this problem. Perhaps on the next visit I will come better prepared.

Again, thanks to everyone for a

most interesting and enjoyable evening.

—Stella Bamvil
Silver Spring, Md.

⇒ *We are sure that Michelle Lynn, Greater Philadelphia Chapter leader, and C.J. Gallente, national treasurer, appreciate these kind words. Our investigations have failed to discover the identity of Ms. X. Won't she come forward to receive her due recognition?*

Quote/unquote...

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

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The **FORUM** For Ideas

Boulton & Park's 19th Century mentality

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Before you read any further in this column, please turn to page 16 and look for JoAnn Robert's item on the Texas 'T' Party. It's in the center column, about half way down the page. See it? Come back when you've finished reading it.

Did that business about a dress code for the 1993 'T' Party seem surrealistic to you? Did you think it was a delayed April Fool joke? After all, here is an organization, presumably dedicated to championing the rights of individuals to wear the clothing of the other gender as they see fit, in fact, imposing standards on what people may wear? No fishnet stocking, no miniskirts, no spike heel shoes or you will be expelled. Is this a gathering of transvestites or a Catholic school

reunion?

Sadly, jokes fall flat when faced with the cold reality that the organizers of the event haven't a clue as to what civil rights and the freedom of expression is all about. They don't seem to understand that there isn't a dime's worth of difference between their dress code and laws — still on the books in some localities — that prohibit men from going out in public dressed as women.

The saddest irony of all is that the Boulton & Park Society takes its name from two British cross-dressers who were arrested because they dressed the way they desired in public. In his landmark history of transvestism and drag, *Dressing Up*, British author Peter Ackroyd tells the story...

"...perhaps the most famous case of transvestism in the nineteenth century is that of Boulton and Park. With them we leave the restless and disturbed world of heterosexual crossdressing and return to the garish and often unconvincing theatre of homosexual transvestites. Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park — known popularly as 'Stella' and 'Fanny' — were arrested outside the Strand Theatre on 28 April 1870. They were both dressed entirely in women's clothes, and it was in that state that they were brought before the Bow Street magistrates for 'conspiracy to commit a felony.'"

The "outrageous and exhibitionistic" gay transvestites, Ackroyd notes, were eventually acquitted of the charges against them.

(continued on page 13)

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Phaedra takes on the British government, again

⇒ *Nearly two years ago, in arguing before the European Court in Strasbourg, France, the British government claimed that Carolyn Cossey (Tula) was not a female despite her sexual reassignment surgery 18 years ago and so could not have her birth certificate changed and could not marry a man. The court upheld that argument, at least as far as British transsexuals are concerned. Never one to let such matters lie, transgender activist Phaedra Kelly, shares her recent government correspondence with RN readers, providing an insight into the Conservative government's rationale for standing alone among European nations by limiting the civil rights of transsexuals.*

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON

Dear Ms. Kelly,

Thank you for your letter of 6 January to the Prime Minister about transsexuals and others. I am sorry that the acknowledgement you received was incorrectly addressed. Your letter has been passed to the Home Office for reply, because, as you know from our previous correspondence, we share, with some other departments, a close interest in this subject. I understand that you have been informed by No. 10 Downing Street that it will not be possible to fulfill your request to meet the Prime Minister.

Given the broad areas of concern set out in your letter, I will confine my comments to the main issues. We are aware of the difficulties experienced by transsexuals particularly, and these were among the matters to which the Government, in its consideration of the recent case of Caroline Cossey before the European Court, gave careful thought.

As you well know, Miss Cossey

complained of the fact that under English law she cannot claim full recognition of her changed status. She alleged violations of Articles 8 and 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Article 8 (the right to respect for private life) was alleged to have been violated on the grounds of the refusal of the United Kingdom to allow the birth register to be amended to record her female sex and to recognize her female sex for other legal purposes. Article 12 (the right to marry and found a family) was alleged to have been violated because under United Kingdom law she was unable to contract a valid marriage with a person of the male sex.

The United Kingdom Government's case at Strasbourg was based on the fact that an operation on the anatomy cannot alter the gender indicated by cell-typing, which does not change. The United Kingdom argued that the biological sexual constitution of an individual is fixed at birth at the latest and cannot be changed by medical or surgical means. Gender reassignment surgery cannot therefore alter the biological sex of a person, as determined by the three recognized biological criteria, namely chromosomal, gonadal, and genital; nor can it change someone who is biologically a man into someone who is biologically a woman. The Court accepted in its judgment that the United Kingdom Government was entitled to take this view and found that there had been no violation of Articles 8 and 12 of the Convention.

Nevertheless, the Government has made various arrangements to base the situation of transsexuals in daily life. For example, a passport, which may in many circumstances be used as a validating document, may be made out in the new name and the costs of gender reassignment

surgery may be borne by the National Health Service. A flexible approach is also adopted in other matters as the allocation of prisoners.

The Government has no present plans to undertake a review of the legal position of transsexuals or others who may be gender transient. But we recognize the experience in this area is still being developed, and we shall continue to pay close attention to the implications for our future policy and practice.

—Digby Griffith

Assistant Private Secretary

⇒ *Miss Kelly responds...*

Dear Mr. Griffith,

Since we have communicated before, you ought by now to know that it's "Miss" not "Ms." It ought also to be clear that after this length of time I am not amused that my mail to the Prime Minister is still being obstructed and diverted to your offices by minions.

If (Prime Minister John) Major now also wishes to insist that he doesn't care, and has no time for our community, then let him be man enough to convey that message in person or sign it himself. We would better respect him for honesty and straightforwardness. Indeed, he would be rewarded only with our patience and further modest and peaceful attempts to prove our case in writing to him. What has he to lose?

Nothing—bar the obstruction of minions and your offices—prevents Major from meeting us and learning first hand what our needs are. He found it possible to meet a leading homosexual about their problems; he can and should do as much for our community.

My request was not solely to do with transsexual's marriage rights. That is Miss Cossey's concern. My

(continued on page 14)

Phaedra takes on the British government

(continued from page 12)

interest is in the general, daily civil rights of the transgendered.

What amusing Home Office diplomatic doubletalk describes the reason why the transgendered, even non-surgically altered, are not equally protected under the Equal Opportunities Act in work as well as in all areas of ordinary life?

Why, for example, is a court of civil law allowed to discriminate against me, claiming that there is "background" for a crime, based on my "wearing lady's clothes?" There are, these days, no such things as "lady's clothes" and women's clothing, is as often that of men. My personal sartorial rights and choices ought not to have any bearing on any legal cases I may be involved with, unless I have been using those clothes to otherwise transgress the law, which I have not, nor ever will I.

The law allows that I may, if I choose, elect to be known for periods of my life by any name, male or female, providing I do not attempt to deceive for fraudulent purposes. The law allows that so long as my genitalia is covered decently and I am not engaged in any illegal acts, I may wear what I like, regardless of my genital status. Now there is an equality law that apparently allows a woman more leverage on those scores simply because she is a woman, but which discriminates against me for what is merely the

complementary equality.

Since you have taken over from Major as prime minister, how do you propose to rationalize that? It is fair to advise you that all this mail is now being shared with the

international transgender community and its own media? They await your reply with interest.

—Miss Phaedra Kelly
International Gender Transit
Affinity

The Closet

For as many years as I can remember
I have remained a captive of solitude.
As often as I have longed
to share with someone my essential being
have the shuffling of feet and muffled voices
torn at my heart
from behind this wall of solitude:
my unique isolation

Once, one time only,
was I able to discern a distinct voice
from the muddle of unacceptance.
My ear pressed to the wall,
breathless,
breathless is anticipation that someone might accept me.

I heard a whisper that I alone have the key
to release me from my solitude.
In that isolation, I can reflect endlessly
on those few poignant words.

But in this darkened closet
I can't seem to find it.
So I am left to reflect:
to whom belonged that one-time whisper of kindness
and the course of my unique isolation?

—Susan London

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The story behind the Mona Lisa logo

(continued from page 1)
again and has come up with a new theory about two other Renaissance figures. She says that the popular image of William Shakespeare found on the first edition of his collected works is an altered portrait of Queen Elizabeth I.

Schwartz, who has won both an Oscar and an Emmy for her computer artwork and who is a consultant for AT&T Bell Labs, claims that the engraver of the Shakespeare portrait just changed a few things on a 1588 painting of Elizabeth—

like adding a moustache and beard. But because Schwartz does not claim that the queen was Shakespeare in male drag, neither Shakespeare nor Elizabeth is a candidate for a new Renaissance mascot.

But then again...

Two of Shakespeare's plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* revolve around cross-dressing. And don't forget that casting boys in the female roles in all of Shakespeare's plays is thought to be the origin of the word "drag," i.e., an abbreviated script note for

"Dressed As a Girl."

Maybe Shakespeare isn't called the Bard of Avon for nothing.

☞ *Before you Mona Lisa fans take pen in hand and argue against the proposal, we suggest you read another modest proposal, this one by John Bunyan*

Remember 1987?

(continued from page 1)

phia. In the basement of a house belonging to Gary Heidnik, police found two half-naked women in chains but alive. The body parts of a third woman were found in a cooking pot, and the body of a fourth was discovered in a shallow grave in South Jersey. The remains of seven women were later found in an apartment rented by Harrison "Marty" Graham. Neighbors had complained about the stench coming from the apartment. The only good news was that neither man was a transvestite.

How about those trends from 1987? Alf supposedly displaced Max Headroom, Cher was reported to have displaced Madonna, and substance was to replace style. Well, two out of three isn't bad.

On the fashion front, long evening gowns were out, short were in; citrus colors were hot, neutrals were not; rhinestones had lost their glimmer to silk flowers; liposuction was supposed to make exercise obsolete; and Louis Vuitton bucket bags displaced quilted Chanel chain-strap purses (at least until the street vendors got their supplies of Chanel knock-offs).

Permanently (and mercifully) doomed were "Baby on Board" signs, Yuppies, Caribbean cooking, and fern bars. We could say "not one second too soon," but because of a gradual slowing of the earth, 1987 was 31,536,001 seconds long.

And we wanted it to last forever.



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PHILADELPHIA - Happy, happy birthday baby...

My congratulations to Renaissance on five years of service to the transgender community.



NEW YORK CITY - Just what kind of man are you?...

The ad reads, "Are you a man who reads *Glamour*?" The editors of the monthly fashion magazine want to know about the kind of man who reads their magazine, so I told 'em, about me at least. Hopefully, a lot more crossdressers will reply to the request and they'll publish the results of their survey.

If you'd like to tell *Glamour* what kind of man you are, write to Men Who Read *Glamour*, 350 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017.



PALO ALTO, CALIF. - The opposite sex is...

Renaissance alumna **Kate Bornstein** was in town in March appearing in her latest play *The Opposite Sex Is... Neither* as seven different transgendered characters. We didn't get a lot of advance notice, and only a few folks got to see Kate and the play.

That wasn't the case, however, for the attendees of the Western Region meeting of the **Society for the Scientific Study of Sex**. Kate's play was included as part of the convention registration fee.



SAN FRANCISCO - Getting bent for a good cause...

Our gal **Billie Jean Jones** was one of the celebrity judges for **Genderbent!**, a drag extravaganza benefit held in late March. Jones, you may recall, is the reigning **Miss ETVC 1992**.

The event included performances by **The Pleshettes**, **Pussy Tourette**, **Rodney O'Neil Austin**, **Elvis Herselvis**, **Justin "Glam" Bond**, and **Cliff Hengst**.

Special prizes were awarded to

contestants in these categories:

- Best Man As a Dyke
- Best Woman As a Man In Drag
- Fabulous Over 50
- Most Glamorous
- Best Death Drag
- Perfect Androgyny

Sounds like they had a lot of fun with this one. By the way, the benefit was for **The LAB**, a center for the development and presentation of visual, performing, literary and media arts.



SAN ANTONIO, TEX. - "T" for two and to heck with you...

Since last month, I've had several phone calls from people who attended the **Texas "T" Party** in February. "Yes," one said, "there were over 300 people there, but nobody seemed to be having much fun." Maybe there were just too damn many rules to remember.

Next year, according to the April issue of *Gender Euphoria*, (**Bolton & Park Society**, sponsors of the "T"), there will be a change in the attendance rules - couples only. If you're single, according to the "T" committee, "...you've got a year to find yourself a partner and talk them into attending the "T" with you!" Yeah, right!

Also clarified is the '93 dress code. No minis, no fishnets, no spikes, and the "T" committee reserves the right to require anyone to change their attire. Those who refuse will be barred from further "T" activities.

It's also been rumored that only local or "approved" vendors will be invited for 1993. There were some vendor problems this year. One was told to put away a publication that the "T" committee thought was obscene and another was told they couldn't sell breast forms.

The Feb./Mar. issue of *TV Guise* has **Billie Jean Jones'** report of the "T", and she called the Hospitality Suite the *Hostility Suite*. It does seem like all the private hang-ups

and phobias of the "T" Party committee have been turned into rules for attendance, but even I would not have predicted the couples-only ploy.



HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. - At least she's honest about stealing...

The illegal use of copyrighted material, primarily cartoons, is rampant within this community, but **Vicki Stone**, at **L.I.F.E.** has taken it almost to a new art-form.

Stone frequently alters syndicated cartoons by substituting her own dialogue. She's even gone so far as to add her name below that of the original artist on occasion.

What is really mind-boggling, though, is the fact that Stone is an attorney who should know better.

By the way Vick, there is no such organization as the Renaissance Educational Society of Philadelphia. That's one cut 'n' paste you got wrong.



ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - If you think Stone's got *cajones*, check this ...

The misguided soul who produces *Fiesta!* (**Fiesta Tri-Ess**) thinks that the following statement absolves her from any wrongdoing:

"NOTICE: All use of cartoons, quotes, and articles will not be considered an infringement of the Federal Copyright Law, as under Section 107: Education and Fair Use. All misuses of cartoons falls into the strange and murky depths of artistic license."



INDIANAPOLIS - Maybe the Japanese are really ahead of us ...

I know I've seen this mentioned somewhere else, but the April issue of the *IXE News* (no this is not an April Fool story) carried a story from the March 20 issue of the *Comics Buyer Guide* that tells of a Japanese comic book called *Ranma 1/2*.

What makes the book so interesting is the main character, a

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teenaged boy who sometimes and without warning turns into a teenaged girl. That should send a shiver up some spines.

According to the article, *Ranma 1/2* is the number one best selling comic in Japan and has spawned a hit television series. *Ranma 1/2* will be available here in the U.S. (in English) sometime in May.



DELAWARE VALLEY - Lookin' for a good time? Call...

I get a lot of phone calls from people who want to know where to meet TVs and TSs socially. I'm always careful to explain that our meetings are for peer support but that anyone is welcomed to attend. More often than not, they decline to come to a meeting.

However, I hate to send people away empty-handed, so I mention three of the favorite hang-outs for our sisters in the area. So, if you're one of those people looking for a partner or a date, try:

Sunday Night - The **WSC** in Norristown on 624 W. Main Street.

Monday Night - The **Cartwheel** on Route 202 outside New Hope.

Tuesday Night - **Gatsby's** in Cherry Hill on Cuthbert Blvd.



MINNEAPOLIS - If only there were more sisters who felt this way...

It is not without good reason that Minneapolis has one of the most respected gender clinics in the country. The people here seem to be very loving, open and giving.

Witness the participation of ladies from the **City of Lakes Crossgender Community** in a charity event called **Healing of the Hearts**. According to the March *CLCC News*, the group was responsible for raising some \$2,000 out of over \$100,000 counted to date.

In addition to donating items for an auction, between six and nine members worked the auction itself and four members staffed the coat-

check during a \$100-a-plate dinner.

Now that's impressive and very deserving of recognition. Brava!



ELYRIA, OHIO - And then her voice went up two octaves and she shrank three inches...

From March issue of *la femme SILHOUETTE*, (**Alpha-Omega, Tri-Ess**) comes this story about an interview with a transsexual that appeared in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. The interview contained some very serious disinformation.

It was claimed that this transsexual began hormones and then, "the full mustache she'd had since she was 12 fell out, as well as the rest of her facial hair and the hair on her legs.... She was amazed when her feet started shrinking from a men's size 11 to a size 8..."

Plenty of misinformation is being published about our community; stories like this certainly don't help.

But, I'm baffled that there was no mention in the newsletter of any attempt by members of Alpha-Omega to write to the author or editor and straighten them out so that this won't happen again.



COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. - Growing nicely, she says...

I reported not long ago that the **Gender Identity Center** here had expanded into the southern part of the state with a "chapter" started by **Jacquelyn Saint Gregory**.

Gregory reports in the March *GIC Journal* that 25 people have expressed interest in the group and they've been averaging 10 to 12 people per meeting, held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.

Anyone interested should contact GIC of Southern Colorado at P.O. Box 5553, Colorado Spring, CO 80931-5553.

Gregory also noted that the chapter voted unanimously to support **EPOC (Equal Protection**

Ordinance Colorado).



HOUSTON - Can Texas stand all this transgender activity?...

First the 'T,' then the IFGE convention, now the first **International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy**. Phew! That's a mouthful.

The conference, brainchild of transgenderist attorney **Phyllis Frye**, is for all legal, employment, personnel, and human resources professionals who have an interest in the current status of and in strategies for progressive changes in law or employment policies.

Co-sponsors of the conference are **Gulf Coast Transgender Community, Bar Association for Human Rights, Association of Women in Law, and Mandamus**. The conference will be held at the Hilton Southwest, August 26 to 30. Write to Frye at 5707 Firenza St., Houston, TX 77035-5515 for more details and a brochure.



SAN ANTONIO, TEX. - Flash! This news just in...

According to **Linda and Cynthia Phillips**, the 1993 Texas 'T' is *not* for couples only. The Phillipses said that newly appointed 'T' honcho, **Tere Frederickson** jumped the gun in announcing a "couples only" event and put it into the B&P newsletter before anyone knew it.

Meanwhile, other sources say that the Phillipses and Frederickson were blasted by B&P locals on learning of the 'T'-for-two plan.

There is also a rumor of a new event planned by a new group forming from the core of the original B&P gals. Maybe a little competition there wouldn't hurt.



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

Renaissance affiliates with Southeastern Pa. United Way

Renaissance has become an official "Specific Care/Donor Choice" agency with the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania. The process was begun last fall when at least two members requested that their United Way contribution be sent to Renaissance, which at the

time was not affiliated with the United Way. The process was completed in March and a check has already been received from United Way representing payment against these 1992 contributions.

If you wish to have money taken directly from your company pay-

check and donated to Renaissance, tell your payroll deductions manager that you want to designate a "Specific Care" choice for your United Way contribution and use our new ID number of 7677. That's all it takes; there is no need to use our name.

Are birth trauma, transsexualism linked?

(continued from page 4)

they said. "The fact that increased left-handedness was observed in the transsexual group is consistent with the suggestion that disturbances in gender identity are due to stress, perhaps associated with pregnancy or birth complications, such as those that have been shown to produce elevated levels of left-handedness" in the general population.

They caution that their research can only be applied to male-to-female transsexuals ("feminized males"). They further warn that their research does not rule out "fluctuations in testosterone levels, such as early excesses followed by later deficiencies."

Perhaps those transsexuals who compared their condition to a "birth defect" were more correct than they

thought.

One footnote to the Watson and Coren research that they said had no bearing on their findings, but is interesting nonetheless. Of the 45 transsexuals studied, 37 percent were heterosexual, 28 percent were homosexual, 19 percent were bisexual, and 16 percent were asexual. However, they did not define any of those terms.

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