



THE GATEWAY



VOLUME 2, NUMBER 7

JANUARY 1980

SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER

Monday, January 14, 8 p.m.
MCC, 150 Eureka St, San Francisco
(on first floor, all the way
to end of hall, door to left
of restrooms)

Thursday, January 31, 8 p.m.
Get-a-Way, 21859 Mission, Hayward

SAN JOSE CHAPTER

Friday, January 4, 8 p.m.
Friday, January 18, 8 p.m.

MCC, 160 N. 3rd St, San Jose
(around side, upstairs,
ring bell)

GGG/G Couple Talk of Relationship

Kathy (also known as Rosebud) and wife spoke on crossdresser's relationships at the Pacific Center's special meeting of TVs and TSs. This was one of the first in regular programs planned for the last Friday of each month. Many couples attended and several singles came, concerned about initiating and developing a relationship, with crossdressing "up front."

The focus was on couple relationships and based heavily on their personal experiences together for eight years. But both talks and questions touched upon many kinds and stages of relationships, including the coming out or divulging process, the initiation, development, maintenance, change, and termination of relationships.

The magnitude of relational problems among the crossdressing population is difficult to assess. Except for very special personal experiences and support from others, neither Kathy nor wife felt they would have appeared. The problems surrounding crossdressing among generally well-established persons can be illustrated by a statistical breakdown done by Kathy of the marital status and ratings of transvestites' wives by the members

of Tri Sigma. About 30% were either single, divorced, or felt their wives didn't know (18%, 12%, and 8% respectively). Among those who were in an open crossdressing relationship (i.e., rated their mates), the "A" through "E" ratings (A - highly supportive; E - violent, accusative, threatens divorce) were 16%, 33%, 33%, 16% and 2% respectively. Somewhat encouraging is the 50% who were judged by their TV mate as cooperative regarding their crossdressing within the relationship (combining the A and B ratings). Note that this is a static view, for example, as the 2% may represent mostly people passing rapidly through to divorce or to a somewhat better relationship while other persons are moving into that "desperate" category. Kathy also read excerpts from letters, illustrating troubles, feelings of suppression, or relational concerns. Though not often voiced (because it

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does not represent a crisis), many wives would probably like to know others, both for information and social reasons. Too often, it seems, there is a compromise which restricts crossdressing to times and places outside the primary relationship. Others, including a large proportion of those who come through switchboards and hotlines, are concerned whether and how to find an understanding woman. They do exist, but they cannot be expected to sit on the sidelines "off the team."

Many of the concepts dealt with were ideas just now being developed. For example, a special "language of clothing" is used for shopping, expressing personal moods and needs, etc. Kathy did not miss this opportunity to ask for a white blouse larger than her only current one! A point was made that many problems parallel those of other couples not involved in crossdressing. But there may be special, even humorous features. For example, consider the logistics of shopping, storing, maintaining and maybe "explaining" three wardrobes per couple. Washing hosiery was no problem--they both ignored it!

Many social and/or contact organizations are available. Both should look for a match between needs and personality of the couple and the philosophy and resources of the organization. Some groups minimize the erotic and perhaps even sensual nature of crossdressing, emphasizing

instead the nurturance of an already established core identity (a second self, the little woman inside?). Metaphors do fit for some people and predetermination concepts can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies. In private, Kathy has referred to this as "the desperate search for the latent lady."

For any couple, there are probably things which should be givens, not negotiable, for maintenance of the relationship (but note that occasional changes are necessary). Kathy's right to wear and obtain dresses has never been questioned since it became clear that crossdressing was something that would not stay in the bedroom and bed. Such a stricture imposed at this time would be hard to understand--and probably impossible to live with--though others have apparently made such adjustments.

Time precluded discussion of a set of myths about crossdressers and their primary other(s), usually based on isolated, often clinical cases, or on weird theories about us (e.g., Stoller).

Wife's view was less conceptually oriented, and gave a compelling account of her personal and family history. Included was a wonderful aunt who tried to enlist in WWII and rated a 4-F on the physical. Her subsequent enlistment in the SPARS resulted in her only appearance in women's clothes for years prior, and never since. Her greatest "weirdness," she stated, is that she can't understand why others find crossdressing unusual (and sometimes acts on this assumption). Each was fascinated to hear the other's version of their changing relationship over the eight years. Perhaps this is an exercise other couples can try (though not necessarily in the "fishbowl"). Neither Kathy nor wife discussed the nature of the talk prior to the meeting.

She talked of barriers to communication, both real and "imaginary." Examples were guilt, uncertainty, mislabelling, and the feeling that the other already knew how one felt. Regarding Kathy's "dry" period or transition

The Gateway

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A Social/Educational
Organization
for Male-to-Female
and Female-to-Male
Crossdressers and
Crossgenderists

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of this publication, please
note The Gateway and the
above address as the source.

from negligees to street clothes, it was felt that she would have to "tough it out" for personal resolution (i.e., that masturbating alone in the bathroom would eventually be insufficient).

A literature search revealed nothing of significance on developmental patterns of relationships in crossdressing. There is information from new research on gay couples, some in relationships for over thirty years. McWhirter and Mattison (U.C.S.D.) will publish a book in Spring. While their research shows some general patterns, it also illustrates creative and devoted coping with special problems and emergencies. Wife did not like the book Transvestites and Their Wives (ed. V. Price) as being too narrow in philosophy.

Kathy thanks all who so helpfully contributed ideas and support. Special acknowledgement from Kathy and wife to Steve Dain, who added so much in his very special way through pertinent questions and personal observations (Kathy and Steve are fellow students at the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality). Kathy takes the blame for this submission, and suggests others encourage their wife to present her view.

SPOUSES AUXILIARY

The December issue of 'The Gateway' contained an article on the Spouses Auxiliary meetings to begin January 4 in San Jose. We failed to mention therein that Mildred Brown, a provider professional, will be the facilitator of these meetings.

Millie has been associated with the Golden Gate Girls/Guys for the past several months and has been very helpful to members consulting her on a professional basis. Failure to mention her was certainly not intentional--rather, a result of hasty proofreading of the galley sheets.

The first week the information of the meetings was out, we had four calls concerning the Auxiliary. We hope the help we are offering will benefit the many seeking and/or needing it.

Dear GGG/G:

I want to say again that your newsletter is of high quality. I read many, many of these organs and I do not say that lightly.

I do intend to publish in our next Journal (with your permission) the material on the rebuttal to Meyer's work. By the way, you might want to read the current Psychology Today, page 20.

Those people won't advertise the International Alliance for Male Feminism, but will publish that abortion they call an article on TSism.

Love, Glenda

Dear GGG/G:

Just read my latest copy of 'The Gateway' and was taken by it. You are doing a great job. I really liked the article on the female TVs. I didn't realize that there were any --or though that, if there were, they wouldn't have the same problems we have. After all, they can wear anything they want without getting hassled by anyone, especially the police.

Thanks again, S.

Hold everything, Miss S. NOT SO! As a female-to-male who crossdresses full-time, I have definitely had my share of getting hassled (by the police, too) mainly by those who decide I'm an effeminate or "faggy" youngman. I'll admit I can get away with a lot more than the male-to-females, but have no illusions of how carefree the female-to-male life is!

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Dear GGG/G:

I have been reading a friend's copy of 'The Gateway' and want to start subscribing. Why don't you put a cut-out subscription coupon in each issue? Bet you would get at least half of them back with subscription requests.

I really like the 'What's Going On?!!' feature. I have made it to most of the shows you mentioned and had a good time at each of them. Money well spent. Without that part, I would never know that there were shows playing around concerning "us" or primarily for "us."

Thanks for "being there" and keep up the good work.

D.

Thanks for the subscription coupon suggestion. We listened, and have included one in this issue, as we will in all future issues. We welcome any and all suggestions for improvement of 'The Gateway.'

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Santa, if you don't keep that new doll in his own closet, I'm not going to have a thing left to wear!

Happening at BACE by Marilyn S.

On November 28th I arrived for my appointment with Gerry at the Bay Area School of Electrolysis in San Jose to have a few pesky hairs removed. It wasn't until I went there that I realized even generic females need to visit an electrolygist on a somewhat regular basis to have unwanted hair removed. While plying her newly-acquired skills, Gerry mentioned that the school was being visited by Lin Fraser and Dianna D. (a pre-op), and that they were going to give talks in an effort to help the students gain an understanding and insight into the area of gender dysphoria and transsexualism.

As we have several mutual friends, I asked if I could meet Lin and sit in on the talks. Gerry graciously granted permission. Having worked in the field of gender dysphoria for several years, Lin was able to point out many areas of challenge faced by the transsexual, and the need for understanding and empathy on the part of the people with whom they deal. She explained the differences between the crossdresser and the transsexual. She smilingly assured the students that the transsexual (male-to-female) would be a long-term client requiring many hours of electrolysis for the complete removal of facial hair, which is one of the vital necessities on the road to a new life and identity; that the transsexual always keeps appointments and certainly always pays for services rendered. She cautioned the students of the transsexual's need for more understanding than the 'average' client and suggested that, if the student didn't feel comfortable working on or with the transsexual in a relaxed, non-judgmental atmosphere, they shouldn't take these people as clients.

After a short question-and-answer period, Dianna gave a talk. She mentioned that she was nervous but seemed poised and relaxed, looking every inch the neatly-dressed and pleasant woman one sees when looking at her. She talked of her life as a boy and the problems she faced growing up knowing she was a girl in a boy's body.

Dianna presented her story in a straightforward, unemotional way, with a touch of humor. How could anyone not like her and feel compassion for what she has accomplished and overcome in her lifetime?

A tape was played with some songs composed and sung by Annie A., giving some idea of the emotions felt by those who find themselves in this difficult life situation. I was especially taken by the song entitled "Androgyny."

The session ended with another question-and-answer period. The students ranged from complete disinterest (or just inability to handle the situation) to extreme interest. The questions seemed sincere and showed concern on the part of the questioners. Many seemed to be making a real effort to understand.

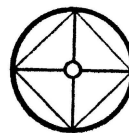
During the 2½ hour session, Lin and Dianna gave a great deal of valuable information. I came away with the feeling that any transsexual is more than welcome at the BACE and would be able to find an operator with whom they could feel at ease and who would treat them with understanding and, more importantly, treat them as people. It was, for me, a morning well spent.

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Psychology WHEN?

Until reading the article beginning on page 20 of the December 1979 issue of Psychology Today, we were under the impression that the only "cure" for the plight of the transsexual was the drastic and life-threatening surgery reassignment procedure. Now it seems that one individual was "cured" during "a two hour session with a faith healer"; another was "cured" by an exorcist; and David Barlow, a psychologist, claims to have "cured" a patient who, at the age of 17, came to him in an attempt to obtain an evaluation and clearance for male-to-female surgery. Barlow undertook a reconditioning program and claims that he retrained the individual, replacing his feminine mannerisms and characteristics with those of a male, even changing the voice pitch from feminine to masculine. In two follow-ups (one 2 years and the other 6½ years later) the ex-client "retained a stable adjustment" and "considers himself completely sexually oriented." Two other clients were "retrained" by Barlow and, while one indicates that he "feels 100% comfortable with his masculinity," the other "made a less successful adjustment because of disabling psychiatric symptoms that he experienced even before seeking surgery."

The author of the article, Richard M. Restak, a member of the faculty at Georgetown University School of Medicine and the Washington School of Psychiatry (like Janis G. Raymond, author of the infamous book The Transsexual Empire) is of the opinion that medical and psychotherapy practitioners are lining their pockets with vast sums of money at the expense of their clients. Raymond goes so far as to claim that professionals are "cultivating" the TS so as to have a continuing crop for harvest!

Naturally, the "Meyer Study" was a highlight in Restak's article and the claim made that the "study" was the sole reason reassignment surgery (except for the correction of true hermaphrodites) was halted at Johns Hopkins.

Restak would like to see the surgical procedures reclassified as "experimental" rather than "routine" as they are now classified. One suspects that few post-operative individuals would feel they are an "experiment."

Restak does make one point, upon which he only touched in passing, and that is the unconsciencible lack of follow-up by the medical professionals and psychotherapists of the post-ops or the "disqualifieds." Meyer of course made quite a point concerning the "favorable adjustment" of the disqualified, breezing right over the fact that more than half of those disqualified by Johns Hopkins went onto other programs where they qualified and completed the surgical reassignment. (It may be unkind, but we sometimes wonder if the medical people don't want to know about the patient's post-op adjustment and life!)

One salient point made in the article, even though more or less an "aside," is the fact that no realistic studies/surveys have been conducted with the pre-operative and the post-operative individuals. If ever a subject needed a comprehensive study, certainly it is this one. One wonders in this day and age of largesse by both State and Federal Governments why such a study has not been made. If the Federal Government can underwrite such important studies as "Why Bees Buzz" and "Why College Students Fall in Love" (studies actually funded by the Feds to the tune of \$85-120,000 in recent years), it's hard to see why they would be unwilling to shovel out the old green to properly qualified applicants proposing such a study. Again, we wonder why the provider community has not taken the necessary steps to accomplish some follow-up interviews or questionnaire completions by members of the "transsexual community." It would surely be in their own best interests to have a study done which would probably refute the Meyer Study and possibly put some of the nay-sayers to rest--at least temporarily.

Individuals conducting such a survey should, of course, be as unbiased as possible so as not to "taint" the results. All too often studies/surveys are undertaken to prove a foregone conclusion (Meyers?) --you know the type: "I know it's no damn good and I'll do a study to prove it!" No, anyone undertaking a project of this sensitivity must do it with as few pre-conceived conclusions as possible and certainly be willing to accept logic reversal if such be the case.

Restak's article could easily have caused us to wield a caustic pen dipped in venom, but anger is a negative, senseless reaction. Positive steps and calm words have more meaning, producing better results in the long run. We should try to stick to the "calm" policy when reviewing "anti" articles/books/lectures. We also bear in mind that each of us is entitled to "our opinion." Rigid, inflexible attitudes will not be changed by angry tirades, but possibly can be changed by calm reasoning. If ever there was an article to inspire anger, Restak's is the article--as Raymond's was the book.



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